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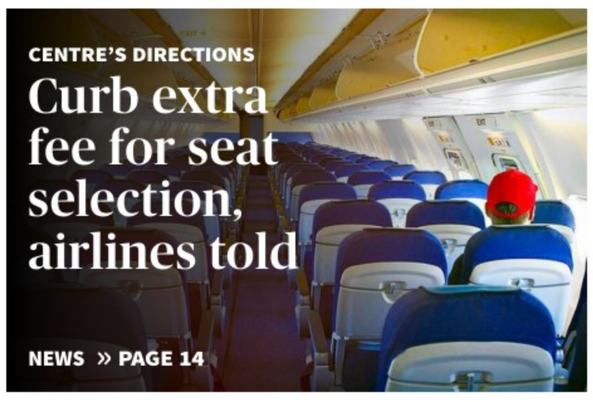
I-PAC RAIDS

Should ED watch as CM disrupts work: SC

NEWS » PAGE 12



CENTRE'S DIRECTIONS

Curb extra fee for seat selection, airlines told

NEWS » PAGE 14

KERALA BATTLE

IUML bets on youth, brings in 11 new faces

ASSEMBLY POLLS » PAGE 13

DATA POINT

Children pay the price of war

Israel accounted for 41% of attacks that ended with a child fatality

OPINION » PAGE 11

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Real Madrid, PSG and Arsenal in last eight

SPORT » PAGE 18

NEARBY

Govt. announces 6-point plan to overhaul KPSC

BENGALURU
The State government has announced a six-point reform plan, including an annual recruitment cycle with a fixed timeline and a five-year recruitment roadmap, to overhaul the alleged scam-hit Karnataka Public Service Commission. » PAGE 8

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Ugadi
There will be no issue of
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as Ugadi is a holiday.
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22 India-bound ships on Hormuz evacuation list

Of these, 20 vessels have been assessed as critical to India's energy security, carrying over 5 lakh tonnes of LNG, LPG and 16.76 lakh tonnes of crude oil; many agencies join hands for evacuation

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

Twenty-two India-bound vessels in the Persian Gulf region have been identified for evacuation for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz by the Indian government.

Of these, 20 vessels have been assessed as critical to India's energy security, carrying some 2.15 lakh metric tonnes of LNG, 3.21 lakh tonnes of LPG and 16.76 lakh tonnes of crude oil. These vessels are both Indian-flagged and foreign-flagged but all are bound for India.

Among the 20 energy-critical vessels, 10 are Indian-flagged. The 20 vessels include three LNG carriers, 10 LPG carriers, and seven crude oil tankers.

Indian-flagged vessel *Jag Laadki* carrying approximately 81,000 MT of crude oil, berthed at Adani Port, Mundra on Wednesday. ANI

Marshall Island, Liberia, Greece, Malta and Portugal are some of the other flags these ships carry.

In addition, two Indian-flagged container vessels have also been identified for evacuation to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

Coordination is ongoing with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways; Directorate of Naval Operations (DNO); Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG); and the Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region for the evacuation of the vessels from the Persian Gulf region.

Two LPG carriers and one oil tanker – *Shivalik*, *Nanda Devi* and *Jag Laadki* – were evacuated earlier, escorted by the Indian Navy from the Gulf of Oman region. The three ships have reached India. The two LPG ships were carrying some 97,000 tonnes of the fuel. Navy sources had told *The Hindu* that the escorting will continue in future as well.

Shivalik has been partially discharged at Mundra and is awaiting commencement of ship-to-ship operations by the charterer, IOC. *Nanda Devi* has doubled-banked with *BW Birch* for ship-to-ship transfer at Vadinar. Cargo operations are expected to start soon.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 14 AND 15

Iran hits Gulf energy sites after attack on its gas field

Stanly Johny

Iran on Wednesday night struck oil facilities in Persian Gulf countries, following the U.S. and Israeli strikes on gas facilities in Iran's southern Bushehr province.

This came hours after Israeli air strikes killed Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmaeil Khatib, the third high-profile assassination in 24 hours.

"Moments ago, parts of the gas facilities located in the South Pars Special Economic Energy Zone in Asaluyeh were struck by projectiles fired by the American-Zionist enemy," Iranian state television reported.

The South Pars/North Dome mega-field is the largest known gas reserve in the world. Iran had earlier warned that any attack on its energy infrastructure would trigger retaliatory strikes at energy facilities in the region.

Sea of mourners: People at the funeral of Iranian security chief Ali Larijani in Tehran on Wednesday. REUTERS

Qatar's state-run energy company said that fires set by Iranian strikes on its main gas facility had caused "extensive damage". "QatarEnergy confirms that Ras Laffan Industrial City this evening has been the subject of missile attacks," the firm said in a statement. "All personnel have been accounted for and no casualties have been reported at this time."

Qatar said that attacks were a "direct threat to its national security". "Qatar considers this assault a dangerous escalation, a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, and a direct threat to its national security," the Gulf state's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

According to late night reports, a second round of loud explosions rang out over Riyadh, after authorities previously said they intercepted four missiles.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
RELATED REPORT ON
» PAGE 16

Nine of family die as fire engulfs building in Delhi

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Nine members of a family, including three children, were killed on Wednesday and three others injured in a fire that gutted four floors of a building housing shops and the living quarters of the family in Ram Chowk, Palam Colony in southwest Delhi.

One of the men died after jumping from the third floor of the building along with his brother's two-year-old girl, who survived. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

The police said they received an alert on the fire around 7 a.m.

Locals said a hydraulic lift did not open, delaying rescue operations. "The first hydraulic lift that had come at 7.30 a.m. did not open. The fire had already spread to the top floors by the time the second lift came at 8 a.m.," said Devi Lal Aggarwal, a resident.

Brutal aftermath: NDRF and Fire Service personnel carrying out rescue operations in Delhi on Wednesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"One man jumped from the third floor along with his brother's two-year-old daughter when the fire spread to the top. He was screaming but the fire services did not have a net to catch him," he said.

However, Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Services, A.K. Malik said, "The claims are not entirely true. The lift was working initially. Technical glitch occurred at about 7.55 a.m., after which another vehicle was brought."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Eight dead as EV explosion sparks fire in Indore house

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Eight people, including two minors, were killed in Indore on Wednesday after a massive fire engulfed a three-storey house following an explosion in an electric car that was being charged outside the premises, officials said.

The fire broke out around 4 a.m. when 12 people were asleep at the house, the police said.

Zone-3 Deputy Commissioner of Police Kumar Prateek told *The Hindu* that of the deceased, six were residents of Bihar who had come to Indore to visit relatives. The State government ordered an investigation into the incident.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Months after demolition, 30 families get land titles; none from Old Fakir Colony

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Minority Welfare and Housing Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan on Wednesday handed over titles to 30 families in an apartment complex in Baiyappanahalli. This comes nearly three months after government agencies demolished more than 160 houses in Fakir Colony and parts of Waseem Layout in Kogilu Layout, Yelahanka.

Of the 30 beneficiaries, 10 belong to the general category, seven to the Scheduled Castes, two to the Scheduled Tribes, and 11 to minority communities.

An independent survey conducted by an NGO found that nearly 170 families were living in Fakir Colony and Waseem Layout before the demolitions. FILE PHOTO

However, residents of Old Fakir Colony, many of whom say they have been living in the area for nearly 17 years, have not received any allotment. The beneficiaries are largely from New Fakir Colony and a few from Waseem Layout.

In February, a senior Housing Department official had told *The Hindu* that only 29 families would get the housing benefits against 145 families, as pegged by the Housing Corporation during its survey during the "first phase of rehabilitation". The official had said the list of 29 beneficiaries included both long-term residents – those who had lived in the area for nearly 17 years, as well as families who had moved in as recently as seven months prior.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 6

Men in Blue — a T20 behemoth

India's brand of cricket at the 2026 World Cup was something to be proud of; the current flavour of the season will be Suryakumar and Gambhir, but it should be remembered that the ball was set rolling by Rohit and Dravid, under whom India ended their 17-year wait for a World Cup title

R. Kaushik

A couple of hours after Tilak Varma held the catch that crowned India T20 World Cup winners for an unprecedented third time, head coach Gautam Gambhir arrived with Suryakumar Yadav, who was proudly holding the trophy, to discharge his media responsibilities. Despite the lateness of the hour - Sunday had given way to Monday - there was no sign of restlessness or irritation amongst the usually restless and irritable media corps. Contrary to what many, even within the team environs, might believe, journalists aren't impervious to results; most rejoice when the team wins and are openly disappointed when the results don't go the Indian side's way, and this was clearly a night of celebration, a night to applaud a magnificent campaign either side of a blip against South Africa.

Gambhir carries the not unfounded reputation of being grumpy and snappy at press conferences, often not even waiting for the questioner to complete his query before launching into a reply that might not have any direct relevance to what the question would have been had the head coach been a little more patient. Of course, one can't entirely blame him because several questions are couched at the end of a long discourse from said questioners, but we digress.

Understandably, Gambhir was gung-ho. He might not admit as much, but this World Cup triumph would have come as a soothing balm, a vindication of his methodologies and his philosophies. Gambhir was under public (and perhaps self-imposed) pressure coming into the tournament; in his brief tenure, he has overseen two crushing home series Test defeats. Given that India hadn't lost at home in the preceding dozen years, two routs in 12 months will remain a millstone around his neck, no matter what happens from here on.

Takes two to tango: Dravid joined forces with Rohit to trigger a turnaround in India's T20 fortunes after the 2021 World Cup debacle. The Gambhir-Suryakumar partnership has continued the good work. ANI & ICC

Fear of losing

The former opener, combative and intrepid, held forth on eschewing the fear of losing, especially when it came to T20s, adding that it was that fear which often resulted in defeats. "The most important thing in this format was that we didn't want to be afraid of losing, because if you are afraid of losing, you never win," he thundered. "I always believe that high risk, high reward is very important in this format. I would have been happier if we had been out at 110-120. But our target was always to make 250 runs. But we didn't want to play the 160-180 runs cricket. For too long, we played cricket with 160-170 runs. But for the last two years, it was the captain's philosophy, the captain's ideology - the captain himself wanted to play high risk, high reward."

Most of what Gambhir said was indisputably correct. But it isn't only in the last two years that India's philosophy has changed. And the duo that initiated the change was the one that ended the country's prolonged wait for a T20 World Cup crown even though India boasted the most visible and high-profile T20 franchise tournament in the universe.

Against all odds, and perhaps thriving on the supreme lack of expectations, India went all the way in the inaugural T20 World Cup in South Africa, back in 2007. Heading into the tournament, India had played exactly one T20 International, the previous December in South Africa which they won. The squad was without several stalwarts — then Test and ODI skipper Rahul Dravid, champion bat Sachin Tendulkar and Dravid's predecessor Sourav Ganguly foremost among the absentees. There was a surprise first-time captain (Mahendra Singh Dhoni) even though the team had experienced hands in Virender Sehwag and Yuvraj Singh, among others. Dhoni's band played a glorious brand of cricket, using the might of their batting and the assistance in Durban to their pace-orientated attack before subduing Pakistan in the final in Johannesburg to come home to a spectacular reception.

Just how much importance the administrators gave the World Cup, in which India were reluctant participants almost browbeaten into confirming their entry, is evident from the grand launch of the Indian Premier League midway through the team's campaign. The World Cup was viewed as a mere obligation to fulfil, but it proved to be the perfect springboard from which the IPL took off because all of a sudden after the magic in South Africa, the format captured and held the imagination of new audiences while continuing to stay relevant with the pre-existing fans.

The IPL was expected to trigger a slew of title-winning runs, but that wasn't the case, evidently. The more India's players became familiar with the challenges and demands of the 20-over game, the more every campaign was disappointing because it didn't produce the right result. India had to wait seven more years and three editions when they didn't even make the knockouts for their next appearance in the final, in 2014 when they were hammered by Sri Lanka in Mirpur. They thereafter continued to flatter to deceive, bowing out in the semifinal in Mumbai in 2016 to West Indies and crashing out of the delayed next edition, in the UAE in 2021, in the first round after dispiriting losses in their first two games to Pakistan and New Zealand respectively.

The desert misadventure was Ravi Shastri's last assignment as the India head coach and Virat Kohli's final engagement as the country's T20I captain. Shastri was succeeded by Dravid, Kohli by Rohit Sharma and this was the catalyst for India shedding conservatism and embracing the enterprise and fearlessness which is an absolute non-negotiable in the 20-over game.

Change of approach

The Gambhir quotes presented a few paragraphs previously are so easily attributable to Dravid, and perhaps with greater reason. Clearly, in 2021, India were seized by the fear of losing. Their batting, especially, lacked creativity and imagination; the onus was on building an innings, keeping wickets in hand and then trying to explode at the end, which might have worked wonders in 50-over cricket at one point, but which is the very antithesis of how to approach a 120-ball innings. Gambhir said the 'high risk high reward' ideology was the captain's. Guess what? It was his predecessor, Rohit, who was the poster boy of the 'high risk high reward' approach, setting the tone with his selfless assaults as an opener and therefore erasing the necessity to tell the others what to do because when you put your money where your mouth is, you don't need to ask others to contribute, do you?

India's scoring rates undertook a dramatic upswing in the immediacy of the Rohit-Dravid leadership group forming an unexpectedly awesome pair of opposites united by several common threads. It's often wrongly perceived that India's 20-over philosophy changed dramatically after their crushing ten-wicket loss to England in the semifinal of the World Cup in Adelaide in November 2022. But the die had been cast long before that, as Dravid told this writer a couple of months after the 2024 World Cup triumph.

"People use that semifinal as a changing point but honestly, in our first meetings itself, we were on the same page that we needed to change the way we were playing T20 cricket," Dravid had pointed out. "If you notice our scores from, say, the UAE World Cup to the T20 World Cup in Australia, you'd see a marked difference. The wheels had started to turn well before that semifinal loss. That England loss was a disappointment, perhaps the conditions suited England more. But we were moving in that direction (of aggressive batting) well before that (Australia) World Cup. And we continued that into the 50-over World Cup, Rohit led that beautifully."

Rohit had four T20I centuries from 111 innings when he became the T20I captain, and added just one more in his 40 hits as the leader, but even though his average dropped by nearly five runs during that phase, his strike-rate went up and he did the tough job, irrespective of the conditions or the opposition, without complaint. After all, how could he complain when it was his idea in the first place, you say? What makes it all the more remarkable is that for more than 14 months, between the Adelaide loss to England in November 2022 and home series against Afghanistan in January 2024 - India's last outings before the World Cup in the Americas - he didn't play a single T20I with the focus shifting to the 50-over home World Cup in October-November 2023. To lose none of his T20 nous and reel off a fifth century, more than five years after his fourth, was a huge personal triumph for the captain who then ran a fabulous ship during the 2024 World Cup.

Gambhir was graceful in dedicating the title to, among others, 'Rahul *bhai* for everything he's done during his tenure to keep Indian cricket in such a good shape.' At the same time, he held forth on not merely inheriting a successful team but also in creating something. "Hopefully, we've created something which all of you guys could be proud of, the brand of cricket we've played."

India's brand of cricket at the 2026 World Cup was something to be proud of. There was a 160-run innings (161/9), something Gambhir hates (his words, not ours) in the very first outing against United States, but it's a sign of how high this side has raised the bar that subsequent efforts of 209, 175 and 193 while batting first on less than perfect batting strips were seen as underwhelming. After the Ahmedabad meltdown (India were dismissed for 111, their lowest World Cup total), a return to flat surfaces brought the best out of the Indian batting. In three of their last four matches, India batted first and responded with totals of 256, 253 and 255; in the virtual quarterfinal before the last two efforts of 250-plus, they scaled down West Indies' 195 at Eden Gardens with reasonable comfort. Now, that's what we are talking about.

Jasprit Bumrah has shown that even two overs of exceptional bowling is more influential in deciding the outcome of a tight contest (the semifinal against England) than a string of fours and sixes, but the T20 format will continue to remain a batter's game and that's where India have grabbed the lead. The current flavour of the season will be Suryakumar and Gambhir, as they should be, but let's not lose sight of the fact that the ball was set rolling by Rohit and Dravid, under whom India ended their 17-year wait for a World Cup title.

THE GIST

- Gambhir was under public (and perhaps self-imposed) pressure coming into the tournament; in his brief tenure, he has overseen two crushing home series Test defeats. Given that India hadn't lost at home in the preceding dozen years, two routs in 12 months in Test series will remain a millstone around his neck, no matter what happens from here on
- The IPL was expected to trigger a slew of title-winning runs, but that wasn't the case, evidently. The more India's players became familiar with the challenges and demands of the 20-over game, the more every campaign was disappointing because it didn't produce the right result
- Bumrah has shown that even two overs of exceptional bowling is more influential in deciding the outcome of a tight contest than a string of fours and sixes, but the T20 format will continue to remain a batter's game and that's where India have grabbed the lead

LPG shortage: Minister tells hotels to adjust operations for a week

Muniyappa says limited availability of cylinders made it difficult to meet demand from restaurants, dhabas, hotels, and industries

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Food and Civil Supplies Minister K.H. Muniyappa has urged hotels, eateries and other commercial establishments to adjust their operations temporarily, including switching to alternative energy sources, as the State grapples with an acute shortage of LPG cylinders for commercial use.

Making a statement on the crisis in the Legislative Council on Wednesday, Mr. Muniyappa said the limited availability of cylinders had made it difficult to meet the demand from restaurants, dhabas, hotels and industries.

"We have barely about 1,000 cylinders for commercial use. It is difficult to decide how to distribute these," he said.

The Minister said he had convened a meeting with hotel owners and appealed to them to manage for about a week. "I have asked them to adjust operations, even if it means using electricity. This is a difficult, almost war-like situation, and they will have to cooperate," he said.

> The Centre is in touch with Iran, and around 16 ships are in the queue. Once they are cleared, the situation is expected to ease. Household supply is the top priority and will not be disrupted under any circumstances
>
> **K.H. MUNIYAPPA**
> Food and Civil Supplies Minister

Shipments delayed

Mr. Muniyappa attributed the shortage to supply constraints at the national level, noting that shipments are delayed overseas.

"The Centre is in touch with Iran, and around 16 ships are in the queue. Once they are cleared, the situation is expected to ease," he said.

Mr. Muniyappa said the government plans to pool available stock over a week to improve supply. "We will consolidate the current stock and try to increase availability to 10,000 to 15,000 cylinders, and hold further discussions with stakeholders on distribution," he said.

Domestic consumers

Mr. Muniyappa emphasised that domestic consumers will not be affected. "Household supply is the top priority and will not be disrupted under any circumstances. About 3.52 lakh cylinders are being consumed daily," he said. The Minister said commercial supply has been capped at 20% by the Centre against a daily requirement of 44,000 cylinders, with about 9,000 cylinders currently being supplied.

Priority is being given to essential sectors. Around 4,200 cylinders are being supplied to educational institutions, hostels and hospitals, while about 1,200 cylinders are allocated to government facilities, including canteens at airports, railway stations, bus stations and Indira canteens.

An additional 500 cylinders are being provided to critical sectors such as seed and food processing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, fisheries, zoological parks and sports hostels.

Responding to concerns raised by Congress member Ivan D'Souza on the shortage affecting food supply at the Legislators' Home, the Minister said temporary arrangements had been made during the ongoing Legislature session.

Crackdown on illegal storage of LPG cylinders

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Talaghattapura police have unearthed an illegal storage of LPG cylinders racket and seized 155 cylinders during a raid in south Bengaluru.

Based on a complaint by a food inspector of Bengaluru South Taluk on Tuesday, a case was registered under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The complaint alleged that a gas agency owner had unlawfully stored cylinders in a godown located in Vishweshwaraiah Industrial Layout, 9th Phase, J.P. Nagar.

Acting on the tip-off, police raided the premises and recovered 148 empty cylinders and seven filled 19-kg cylinders belonging to Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (Bharat Gas), which were allegedly being stored in violation of norms.

'Height curbs near airports hindering Bengaluru growth'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar with Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu in New Delhi on Wednesday. ANI

Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development in-charge D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said building height restrictions around key aviation facilities have emerged as a major hurdle to the city's development.

He said the restrictions around HAL Airport, Jakkur Aerodrome, Yelahanka Air Force Station, and Kempegowda International Airport have discouraged citizens from opting for premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR), affecting government revenue.

Speaking to mediapersons in New Delhi after meeting Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, Mr. Shivakumar said the State has urged the Centre to review the restrictions. He noted that cities such as Hyderabad and Mumbai have relatively relaxed norms and sought similar provisions for Bengaluru.

"Citizens are hesitant to opt for premium FAR due to these limits, resulting in revenue loss. The Union government itself has encouraged reducing base FAR while increasing premium FAR," he said.

Mr. Shivakumar added that the Civil Aviation Minister has assured discussions with the Defence Ministry.

He said State officials have already engaged with HAL authorities and that he would seek an appointment with the Defence Minister to press for a solution.

He added that the Civil Aviation Minister has said international guidelines and norms followed in other Indian cities are being studied, and a meeting will be held within a week. With the upcoming Bengaluru Business Corridor, landowners are likely to develop their properties, but height restrictions would pose challenges, he added.

Second airport

On the proposal for a second international airport, Mr. Shivakumar said the Union government has asked the State to identify a suitable location. The State has shortlisted two to three options and will decide after evaluating their pros and cons. He said he would review the Centre's communication after returning to Bengaluru and has already discussed the matter with the Civil Aviation Minister from the city's perspective.

HC grants default bail to four accused in realtor Biklu Shiva murder case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has granted default bail to four accused, including the prime accused Jagadish P. alias Jagga, in the case of the murder of realtor-cum-rowdy sheeter Shivaprakash alias Biklu Shiva, as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) did not file a charge sheet within the period prescribed in the law.

Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav passed the order while allowing the bail pleas of Jagadish (accused number 1), K. Kiran (accused number 2) Vimal Raj B. (accused number 3), and Madan R. (accused number 7).

The petitioners had questioned the orders, passed by a magistrate court on December 26, 2025, and by a sessions court on February 2, 2026, rejecting their application filed on December 22, 2025, seeking release on default bail due to non-filing of the charge sheet with the specified time.

The High Court pointed out that the CID had 90 days to file a charge sheet from the date of their arrest, but the deadline of 90 days got extended due to invocation of the stringent Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act (KCOCA).

As the High Court on December 19, 2025 held as illegal invocation of KCOCA against all the accused in the cases, the accused are automatically entitled for default bail as the deadline to file charge sheet was reverted to 90 days as provided in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the period extended as per KCOCA ceased to exist, said Justice Yadav.

The High Court noted that the accused had filed a plea for default bail before the magistrate court at 12 p.m. on December 22, 2025, as the CID filed preliminary charge sheet at 5.15 p.m. on the same day.

"The filing of the charge sheet at 5.15 p.m. on December 22, 2025, which is later in point of time after the bail application was filed, could not defeat the indefeasible right accrued to the petitioners," the High Court said while citing the apex court's judgment.

Meanwhile, Justice Yadav clarified that order of granting default bail would be subject to the outcome of the appeal filed by the CID before the apex court challenging the High Court's order of quashing charges under KCOCA against the accused persons. If the apex court restores the KCOCA, the accused must face the legal consequences, the High court said.

Festival vibes

Workers making 'holige' ahead of Ugadi at Malleswaram in Bengaluru on Wednesday; people throng the Flower Market at Malleswaram for their festival shopping. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Students at an exam centre at Malleswaram in Bengaluru on Wednesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

SSLC exam gets off to a smooth start with 98.53% attendance

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Exams were held successfully with 98.53% attendance on Day one of the annual exam-1 for SSLC students on Wednesday across the State. As many as 12,175 students were absent for the First language Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit exam.

Karnataka School Examination Assessment Board (KSEAB), in a statement issued on Wednesday, said that there was no malpractice reported from any of the centres across the State and the exams were conducted without any untoward incident.

Madhu Bangarappa, Minister for School Education and Literacy, visited the Karnataka Public School (KPS) examination centre in Malleswaram, Bengaluru, and greeted the students by offering roses and wishing them best.

Around 8,28,477 students had enrolled for the first language of which 8,16,302 students were present. While Udupi district recorded the highest attendance of 99.62%, Bidar recorded the lowest attendance at 96.39%.

Drugs trafficked via foreign parcels seized, foreign nationals arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a major crackdown, the Central Crime Branch (CCB) Anti Narcotics Wing has unearthed an international drug trafficking network operating through foreign postal channels, and arrested multiple accused, including foreign nationals.

Acting on specific intelligence, CCB officials conducted a special operation at a foreign post office in the city and intercepted suspicious parcels sent from abroad. The police seized 2.865 kg of hydro ganja, 108 gm of MDMA crystals, and 2 gm of cocaine. A case has been registered under the NDPS Act, 1985, at K.G. Nagar Police Station.

Following the seizure, the police tracked down and arrested two accused in Adugodi. Investigations revealed that the accused were using fake names and addresses to receive narcotics sent via international parcels.

Further probe led to the arrest of three foreign nationals who were allegedly overstaying and were involved in the racket. Police said the accused were linked to drug networks operating from multiple countries.

The police said further investigation is under way to identify the wider network behind the drug trafficking racket and trace the origin of the seized narcotics.

In a parallel operation, the city police conducted a drive against illegal immigrants. Police detained three foreign nationals from Nigeria, Tanzania, and Djibouti for visa violations and handed them over to the jurisdictional police station for further action.

Additionally, in an ongoing crackdown, Bengaluru police detained 272 Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in the city. All of them have been handed over to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) for deportation proceedings, City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said.

Minister seeks expert committee to frame guidelines for honorary doctorates

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

M.C. Sudhakar

Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar has written to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot requesting him to constitute an expert committee to formulate the required rules and regulatory guidelines applicable to all State, private, and special universities, so as to ensure adherence to uniform standards in the conferment of honorary doctorates.

In his letter, the Minister said that universities are empowered to confer honorary degrees upon distinguished persons in recognition of their outstanding contributions in various fields under the provisions of the Karnataka State Universities Act, 2000.

Sudhakar says in order to preserve the dignity, and sanctity of honorary degrees, it has become necessary to evolve uniform regulatory norms applicable to all public varsities in the State

"However, concerns have recently been raised in the public domain and on the floor of Karnataka Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council regarding instances where multiple universities have conferred honorary doctorates upon the same individual, and the absence of uniform criteria or limits governing such conferments," the Minister added.

In order to preserve the dignity, credibility, and sanctity of honorary degrees, it has become necessary to evolve uniform regulatory guidelines applicable to all public universities in the State, he opined.

"It is submitted that during the Vice-Chancellors' Conference held on February 21, it was decided to constitute an expert committee to frame rules for the uniform conduct of convocations in universities and to formulate guidelines for a uniform academic calendar and university events".

However, the Minister stated that the issue relating to the conferment of honorary doctorates could not be taken up for discussion during the said meeting.

"In this regard, it is proposed to constitute an expert committee to examine the existing practices relating to the conferment of honorary doctorates and to recommend suitable guidelines to ensure transparency and uniform standards across universities in the State," the Minister said in his letter.

India's frogs find allies from citizen science to sanctuaries

India is home to over 450 amphibian species and roughly a quarter of them are categorised as 'threatened' and one-fifth as 'data deficient'; many species are threatened by climate change and habitat loss, but conservation programmes are turning the tide, and citizens can now join the effort

Karthikeyan Vasudevan

A Malabar gliding frog seen in Amboli, Maharashtra. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

World Frog Day on March 20 celebrates the role of frogs, the world's most numerous amphibians. They live at the interface between freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, eat insects and in turn get eaten by other vertebrates, and are thus crucial in converting insect biomass into vertebrate biomass.

Losing them can mean a boom in insects that prey on plants as well as a depleted food base for many terrestrial vertebrates, which in turn can irreparably damage both freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems. Unfortunately for the earth, since the 1980s, frog and other amphibian populations have been on the decline worldwide. In 2023, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Global Amphibian Assessment Report said 37 species have become extinct and continue to decline, making them the most threatened vertebrate group.

The most prominent historical driver of amphibian decline has been chytridiomycosis, a fungal disease caused by *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and *Bactrachochytrium salamandrivorans* in frogs and salamanders, respectively. This disease affects their skin – an organ that protects them as well as allows respiration and exchange of ions to maintain electrolyte balance. In the last two decades, more than 60% of amphibians globally have been affected by it – although intensive monitoring and conservation efforts have reduced the extinction risk of 63 species, halving the impact.

Today, however, the most important drivers of extinction are climate change for 39% of species and habitat loss for 37%.

The Indian scene

India is home to more than 450 amphibian species, and roughly a quarter of them are categorised as 'threatened' and one-fifth as 'data deficient'. The burden of *B. dendrobatidis* and *B. salamandrivorans* fungi in India is substantial but it has not caused mass mortality the way it has for frogs in the Americas and Australia.

B. dendrobatidis and *B. salamandrivorans* both had their roots in Asia and spread worldwide through the trade on frog legs and salamanders as pets. In 1987, after Humayun Abdul Ali from Bombay Natural History Society published a scientific report highlighting their role in controlling agricultural pests, this trade was banned. However, by then, frog and salamander populations had been significantly affected as *B. dendrobatidis* had spread from Asia to Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

The situation in India itself is rather unique. Until 2015, scientists were unsure of the status of *B. dendrobatidis*; a diagnostic test emerged only in 2023. That said, while scientists in the country have not documented mass die-offs, they also haven't found the status of amphibians to have improved in the last two decades. Since they lack long-term monitoring data for any species, it is difficult to pinpoint the causes.

In fact, India hosts a significant share of the world's 'data deficient' amphibian species. And of the 157 threatened species in India, only six are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

Climate change in India also presents a serious challenge. One well-known consequence is the mismatch between seasons and the natural rhythms of plants and animals. So a false cue of an early monsoon followed by a prolonged dry period can result in catastrophic breeding outcomes. At the same time, thanks to the lack of long-term datasets on surface water availability and amphibian populations in the region, scientists are also unable to predict the effects of climate change on them.

A time to care

The monsoons arrive at India's shores predictably every year and are synonymous with the frogs' chorus, when the adult males call out for mates. The females mate with several males and deposit their eggs in the water. The intensity of breeding frenzy wanes rapidly thereafter, when some laggards and first-time breeders might take a shot at breeding. While not all adult amphibians successfully breed every year, the intensity enhances the population's chances of survival.

The breeding activity is focused on producing many tadpoles, which then engorge themselves on the luxuriant growth of algae in water bodies and grow quickly. They metamorphose into small froglets and hop on the land. In this phase, many lose out as they become prey to animals. Because of their short lifespan, the timing of their complex breeding behaviours with rain, and the availability of surface water in streams and puddles, is critical.

Climate change presents a serious challenge and a well-known consequence is the mismatch between seasons and the natural rhythms of plants and animals. A false cue of an early monsoon followed by a prolonged dry period can result in catastrophic breeding outcomes

Other important conservation efforts include the creation of the salamander sanctuary in Jorepokhri in West Bengal in 1985 (although it does not support a breeding population at present), the University Grants Commission banning the dissection of frogs for educational purposes in 2011; and the ongoing conservation breeding programme for Himalayan salamanders at the Padmaja Naidu Zoo in Darjeeling.

Avenues to participate

There have also been more success stories of late. These include the Mapping Malabar Tree Toad Project, a citizen science project, coordinated by K.V. Gururaja in the Western Ghats; the Amphibian Recovery Project by S. Harikrishnan of the Wildlife Trust of India in Munnar, Kerala, with the Kanan Devan Hills Plantations Company Pvt. Ltd.; and the Himalayan Salamander Conservation Project led by Barkha Subba, in which she has involved the locals in protecting habitats. The CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (where the authors are employed) has also been running a long-term programme to monitor stream frogs, in collaboration with the Maharashtra State Forest Department in Tillari Conservation Reserve.

The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoo and the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad also prominently display amphibians in their collection of animals and spread awareness to visitors. There is also a growing number of young professionals implementing conservation programmes.

For a nation that embodies its conservation values in its Constitution, citizens have many avenues to participate: for instance, one can take a few minutes of their time to record their calls or take photographs of both healthy and sick frogs following ethical guidelines and share them on citizen science portals like iNaturalist.

Such efforts will help us move beyond a few charismatic species such as tigers and pandas.

The monsoon will arrive in a few months and we should play our role in amphibian conservation.

(Karthikeyan Vasudevan is a Chief Scientist at the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. He is a herpetologist who works on amphibian disease ecology. karthik.ccmb@csir.res.in)

The Large Hadron Collider during maintenance works in 2013, in Meyrin, near Geneva. AFP

Large Hadron Collider discovers a new particle

The Hindu Bureau

The Large Hadron Collider has discovered a new particle, the 80th identified so far by the world's most powerful particle smasher, Europe's CERN physics laboratory announced on Tuesday.

The new particle has been named "Xi-cc-plus". Scientists have expressed hope that the particle – which is similar to a proton but four times heavier – will reveal more about the strange behaviour of quantum mechanics.

All the matter around us, including the protons and neutrons that make up the nucleus of atoms, are made of baryons. These common particles are composed of three quarks, which are fundamental building blocks of matter.

Quarks come in six "flavours": up, down, charm, strange, top and bottom. Each has varying mass, electric charge and quantum properties. In theory, there could be many different types of baryons that mix these flavours. However, most are extremely difficult to observe.

To chase them down, the Large Hadron Collider sends particles whizzing around an underground ring at phenomenal speeds until they smash into each other. This gives scientists a brief chance to measure how the more stable elements decay, then deduce the properties of the original particle.

The new particle has been named "Xi-cc-plus" and scientists hope that the particle – which is similar to a proton but four times heavier – will reveal more about quantum mechanics

The newly discovered Xi-cc-plus contains two "charm" quarks and one "down" quark. Normal protons have two "up" quarks and one "down" quark. Because the new particle has two heavier "charm" quarks instead of "up" ones, it is much heavier.

Vincenzo Vagnoni, spokesman for the Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) experiment, said it was "only the second time a baryon with two heavy quarks has been observed". It is also "the first new particle identified after the upgrades to the LHCb detector that were completed in 2023," he said in a statement.

"The result will help theorists test models of quantum chromodynamics, the theory of the strong force that binds quarks into not only conventional baryons and mesons but also more exotic hadrons such as tetraquarks and pentaquarks."

In 2017, the LHCb experiment announced that it had discovered a similar particle, made of two "charmed" quarks and one "up" quark. The new particle differs only in having a "down" quark in place of the "up" quark – a small change that has profound consequences.

Due to complex quantum effects, the new particle has a predicted lifetime up to six times shorter than its counterpart, making it far more tricky to spot, CERN said.

The collaboration observed the new baryon by analysing data from proton-proton collisions recorded during the third run of the LHC, achieving a statistical significance of 7 sigma, well above the 5 sigma threshold required to claim a discovery. CERN Director-General Mark Thomson called it "a fantastic example of how LHCb's unique capabilities play a vital role in the success of the LHC."

The Large Hadron Collider is a 27-km long proton-smashing ring running 100 metres below France and Switzerland. Famously, it proved the existence of the Higgs boson – known colloquially as the "God particle" – in 2012.

(With inputs from AFP)

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Metaphors from science that are used in conflicts

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

_____ ____ is the point at which a policy or insurgency becomes self-sustaining. In nuclear physics, it's the minimum amount of fissile material required to maintain a nuclear chain reaction. The metaphor alludes to a system technically transitioning from a stable state to a self-propelling one. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2

X is a metaphor for removing entrenched corruption or a hidden class of bureaucrats but which in history was used to eliminate the breeding grounds of vectors, like mosquitoes, and so stop the spread of malaria and yellow fever. Name X.

QUESTION 3

To do this is to destroy a region so thoroughly that an opponent can never return to power or rebuild there. Taken literally, it refers to when a high concentration of sodium chloride in the soil draws water out of plant roots through osmosis, dehydrating them from the inside. What is it?

QUESTION 4

Biologists say a substance is '_____' if it interferes with the internal balance of a living organism, leading to harm or death. But in policy circles, it refers to environments or assets so poisonous that they threaten the health of institutions. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5

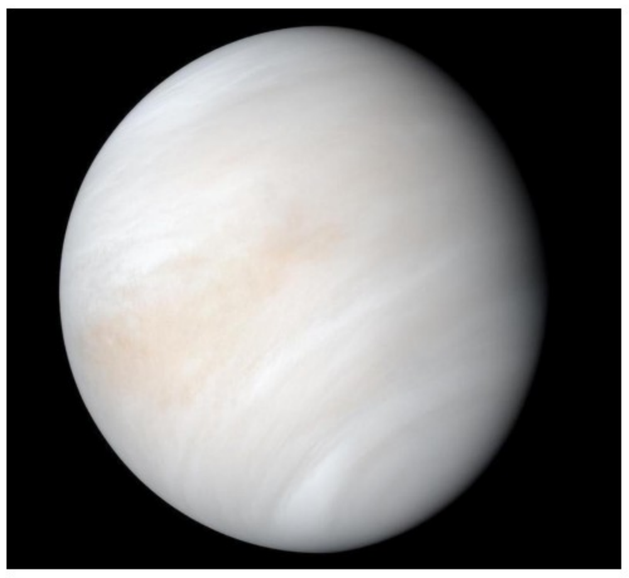
In chemistry, Y is the lowest temperature at which a liquid yields enough vapour to form an ignitable mixture in the air — meaning at this point, the environment is primed for combustion. In the context of war, Y is where a specific area is likely to erupt into sudden and violent conflict. Name Y.

Answers to March 17 quiz:

1. 1977 Spielberg film culminating at Devil's Tower – **Ans: Close Encounters of the Third Kind**
2. 1997 adaptation of a Carl Sagan novel – **Ans: Contact**
3. 1990 film exploring use of L-DOPA to revive encephalitis lethargica patients – **Ans: Awakenings**
4. 1983 following the Mercury Seven pilots – **Ans: The Right Stuff**
5. Film exploring the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, non-linear time – **Ans: Arrival**

Visual: Douglas Trumbull

First contact: Tamal Biswas | K.N. Viswanathan | Prem Nath Tiwari | Appa Rao M.V. | Soumit Chakraborty



VISUAL: Scientists believe the Z greenhouse effect left Venus's surface a hot hellscape. In a governance setting, Z refers to a positive feedback loop. What is Z? NASA

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

BMTC to roll out smart ticketing system with 11,000 digital ETM devices

The long-awaited upgrade will replace existing fare collection methods with smart electronic ticketing machines, aimed at improving efficiency and commuter convenience

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a major push towards modernising the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), the transport corporation is set to introduce a fully integrated digital ticketing solution across its bus network.

The long-awaited upgrade will replace existing fare collection methods with smart electronic ticketing machines (ETMs), aimed at improving efficiency and commuter convenience, according to BMTC officials.

BMTC has awarded a four-year contract to a mobility startup for the supply, operation, and maintenance of around 11,000 advanced ETMs. The agreement includes the deployment of a comprehensive ticketing software and back-end infrastructure, according to officials. The new system is designed to support multiple digital payment options, including Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC).

The smart ETMs are Android-based handheld devices equipped with high-resolution touchscreens and built-in thermal printers. FILE PHOTO

"The move comes in response to growing commuter demand for seamless, contactless payment options while travelling on city buses," officials said.

Real-time ticketing

Many passengers have previously flagged the QR-based system as inconvenient and outdated.

"Unlike the current system, which largely depends on static UPI QR codes displayed inside buses, the upgraded ETMs will enable conductors to process payments and issue tickets in real time," official added.

The smart ETMs are Android-based handheld devices equipped with high-resolution touchscreens and built-in thermal printers. "They will allow conductors to generate tickets instantly, scan QR codes, and accept card-based payments. The machines will also transmit ticketing data directly to BMTC's central system using high-speed connectivity such as 5G or Wi-Fi," an official explained.

The initiative builds on BMTC's earlier attempt to digitise fare collection. In January 2024, the corporation introduced static UPI QR codes in nearly 75% of its buses following commuter requests. Since then, digital transactions have seen a steady rise.

Procurement gaps hit transport corporations, says Minister

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy on Wednesday said that the absence of procurement of buses between 2019 and 2023 had adversely affected the functioning of State-run transport corporations.

Replying in the Legislative Council, he said not a single bus was purchased during the four years.

"If buses are not procured continuously, it will impact the organisation," he said, attributing current deficiencies to this gap.

He flagged a halt in recruitment after 2016, adding that since the present government assumed office, around 9,000 personnel have been recruited, including 1,300 on compassionate grounds.

Ramalinga Reddy

Mr. Reddy said over 6,000 buses had been procured in the last two years, with 2,000 added last year and another 1,000 sanctioned in the current Budget. Of the total fleet of about 26,000 buses, nearly one-third has been added in the last two-and-a-half years, he said.

On ageing buses, he noted that while their permitted lifespan is up to 15 years, refurbishment is being carried out. Around 2,000 to 2,500 buses have been refurbished so far.

Responding to concerns raised by member Y.M. Satish on inadequate services in Ballari and Vijayanagara, the Minister said priority would be given to these districts.

For Kalyana Karnataka

The Minister added that 1,173 buses had been allocated to the Kalyana Karnataka region, with 400 more in the pipeline and 56 high-end buses expected to be introduced shortly.

NCB Raising Day observed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Rajarajeshwari Group of Institutions, in association with Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), the Narcotics Control Bureau, and Dishabodh Foundation, observed the 41st Raising Day of the NCB on Tuesday with a Drug Misuse Awareness Programme under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

RGUHS V-C B.C. Bhagwan lauded NCB's efforts and ongoing awareness initiatives across 13 districts through 16 programmes, reaching over 77,000 students and 1,500 teachers. He urged youth to combat drug abuse, foster healthy campuses, and noted that 10,000-12,000 students have pledged support for organ donation.

Kristu Jayanti University receives global recognition

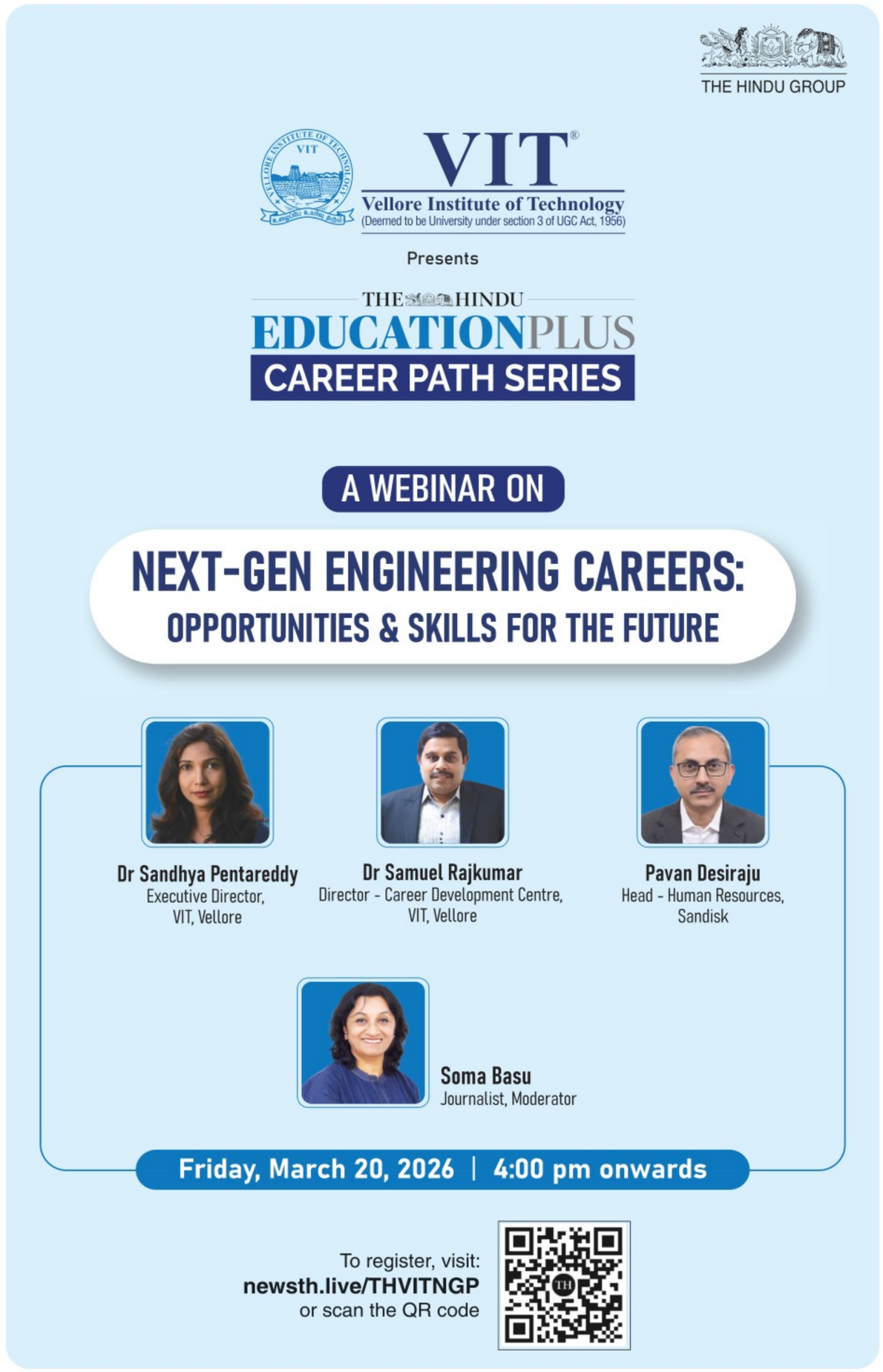
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kristu Jayanti University, Bengaluru, has received global recognition after its Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) Student Chapter was named International Student Chapter of the Year 2026 in Washington DC recently.

The award highlights the chapter's efforts in fostering a strong cybersecurity learning environment and promoting women's participation in the field.

With over 300 members, the chapter has built a vibrant community through initiatives such as WiCyS Study Jams on advanced topics like blockchain and zero-trust security.

It also runs an industry mentorship programme linking students with professionals from leading firms, offering real-world exposure. Through consistent skill development, academic engagement, and industry collaboration, the chapter has become a key platform for nurturing cybersecurity talent and leadership, the university said in a release.



Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Record number of inbound tourists who visited Japan in Feb.

3.46 in million. Visitors to Japan in February rose 6.4% from a year earlier to set a new record for the month, despite a drop-off in Chinese tourists amid ongoing diplomatic tensions between the two countries. REUTERS

Number of deaths of children under five in 2024

4.9 in million. About 4.9 million children under five died in 2024, according to new United Nations estimates. Most of the deaths were preventable with better access to healthcare and low-cost interventions for challenges. AP

Displacements of Palestinians in the West Bank

36,000 A report by the UN warned that Israel's accelerating expansion and annexation of large parts of the West Bank was driving "unprecedented" displacement. AFP

Telegram channels disabled for hosting pirated content

3,142 More than 3,100 Telegram channels and about 800 websites hosting pirated content have been disabled at the government's order, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday. PTI

Number of backlogs of consumer cases between 2020-24

5.15 in lakh. The Consumer Justice Report prepared by the India Justice Report (IJR) said that between 2020 and 2024, the pendency of cases increased by 21%, from 87,545 to 5.15 lakh. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What is new in transgender rights Bill?

How is the government proposing to alter the definition of 'transgender person'? What is the right to self-perceived gender identity? What does the new Bill propose on gender certification and SRS? Why are transgender communities opposing the amendments?

EXPLAINER

Abhinay Lakshman

The story so far:

Twelve years after the Supreme Court recognised the transgender identity and held that "self-determination of gender is an integral part of personal autonomy and self-expression", falling within the realm of personal liberty guaranteed by the Constitution of India, the Union government on March 13 introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to take away transgender people's "right to self-perceived gender identity" and redefine a "transgender person" by proposing amendments to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. Transgender community leaders, activists, and people across the country reacted with shock, arguing that the amendments go against the fundamental principles underlying their long struggle for recognition.

What are the changes being brought about?

The key changes being proposed have to do with the definition of a "transgender person" and the expansion of the section on offences against transgender people and punishments for them.

In the amendment Bill, the Centre has called for the omission of sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act, which says: "A person recognised as transgender under sub-section (1) shall have a right to self-perceived gender identity."

In addition to this, a new definition of 'transgender person' is proposed. It describes them as people "having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta, or eunuch", people with intersex variations, and people who have "congenital variations" in "male or female development" in their "primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomal patterns, gonadal development, endogenous hormone production or response or such other medical conditions".

The definition also includes any person or child who has been "compelled to assume, adopt, or outwardly present a transgender identity, by mutilation, emasculation, castration, amputation, or any surgical, chemical, or hormonal procedure or otherwise". However, it adds that this definition shall not include "persons with different sexual orientations and self-perceived sexual identities".

Compared to this definition, the Act currently defines transgender person as someone "whose gender does not match with the gender assigned at birth and includes trans men and trans women (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta."

Further, a specific definition for "people with intersex variations" has also been proposed to be omitted.

Apart from these, the Bill suggests introducing the terminology for "authority", defining it as "a medical board, headed by a Chief Medical Officer or a Deputy Chief Medical Officer, as may be appointed by the Central government, State government or Union territory Administration".

Another key amendment is on the issuance of transgender certificates. While the law currently mandates the District Magistrate to issue a certificate based on a self-declared affidavit and without physical or medical examination, the proposed amendment requires the District Magistrate to "examine the recommendation of the authority", and decide, if deemed necessary or desirable, and after consulting other medical experts, before issuing the certificate.

Activists and members of the community during a demonstration against the Bill on Wednesday. AFP

A new section has also been proposed, which confers the right of transgender people to have their first names changed in birth certificates and other identification documents, with the caveat that the person should be a "transgender person" under the revised definition.

The Bill also mandates that individuals apply for a revised gender certificate after undergoing SRS, as opposed to the current law, which leaves this to the individual.

Additionally, medical institutions performing SRS would be required to furnish details of such procedures to the District Magistrate.

The Bill also significantly expands provisions relating to offences and penalties, introducing graded punishments, including rigorous imprisonment up to life and fines of up to ₹5 lakh, for crimes against transgender persons and children.

However, it remains to be seen what further changes could come through in the form of Rules, if this amendment Bill is passed by Parliament.

How did the amendment Bill come about?

Union Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar introduced the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, in Lok Sabha on March 13. Days earlier, media reports cited that the Union Cabinet had approved amendments to the 2019 Act, though details were not disclosed. It remains unclear how long the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Centre had been preparing these changes.

Transgender activists, including Tamil Nadu-based Grace Banu, who had been central to the drafting of the 2019 Act, told *The Hindu* that the amendments seem to have been brought in without consultation with the community. Several leaders and members have described their initial reaction as one of "shock", calling the changes "sudden".

Interestingly, just hours before the Bill was introduced, the Ministry had posted on X, promoting the 2019 version of the Act and advertising the fact that this Act allowed the right to self-perceived gender identity as a key feature.

A few days back, on March 4, the Ministry had posted, "The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, safeguards the rights and dignity of transgender persons."

In February, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) informed the Supreme Court that it had developed teacher training modules to build sensitivity towards transgender issues.

It substantiated this by saying that the 2024 module specifically spoke of the difference between gender and sexuality and discussed the idea that sex identity ascribed at birth may be at odds with a person's perceived sex identity at a later stage. The NCERT added that it had been conducting capacity building and training programmes based on similar modules till as late as November 2025, with more planned this year.

Why is there a concern?

A primary concern raised by the transgender community is the omission of the right to self-perceived gender identity, followed by the new definition, which appears to contradict the principles laid down in the landmark 2014 NALSA judgment recognising the right to self-determination of gender.

Ms. Banu said, "there is an issue that the government seems to be including only those in the definition of transgender who may have been accommodated in Hindutva's history and is using terms that indicate Hindutva's accommodation of transgender identity like 'hijra, kinner, aravani,' etc." And there seems to be some sort of refusal to use respectful terms that have evolved for transgender people in other parts of the country, like in Tamil Nadu, where there is now a vocabulary of *thirunagai* and *thirunambi*."

Dr. Aqsa Shaikh has raised the issue of transgender people across the country having to now deal with the existential question of whether they continue to remain transgender as per the proposed new definition, while another Delhi-based transwoman spoke of concerns that this might create divides within the community about who has legitimacy to use the transgender identity.

What does the NALSA judgment say?

The landmark 2014 judgment in *National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India*, delivered by Justices K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri, remains central to India's understanding of gender identity.

When the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, was introduced, the Statement of Objects and Reasons in it noted that it flowed from this very judgment of the Supreme Court, adding that one of the principal goals of bringing this Bill was to "confer right upon transgender persons to be recognised as such, and a right to self-perceived gender identity".

In the judgment that notably recognised a third gender beyond male and female, and the fundamental right of persons to self-determination of gender identity, the court accepted the principle that the concepts of gender and sexuality are different and that gender identity is on a spectrum.

The court said, "Gender identity is one of the most fundamental aspects of life which refers to a person's intrinsic sense of being male, female or transgender or transsexual persons."

The judgment explained that "a person's sex is usually assigned at birth, but a relatively small group of persons may be born with bodies which incorporate both or certain aspects of both male and female physiology. At times, genital anatomy problems may arise in certain persons and their innate perception of themselves is not in conformity with the sex assigned to them at birth and may include pre and post-operative transsexual persons and also persons who do not choose to undergo or do not have access to operation and also includes persons who cannot undergo successful operations."

On sexual orientation, the court defined it as an individual's enduring emotional, romantic, or physical attraction to others.

Importantly, the court held that no person should be forced to undergo medical procedures – such as SRS, sterilisation, or hormone therapy – as a condition for legal recognition of their gender identity.

It concluded that self-determination of gender is integral to personal autonomy, dignity, and freedom under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Justice Sikri, in his judgment concurring with Justice Radhakrishnan, expanded on this, saying, "If democracy is based on the recognition of the individuality and dignity of man, as a fortiori we have to recognise the right of a human being to choose his sex/gender identity which is integral to his/her personality and is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom."

What is the government's reasoning?

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the government said that since the 2019 Act was enacted, "certain doubts and difficulties" have arisen in implementing it with regard to the "definition of transgender persons and how the identification of such persons is to be done".

It noted that the existing definition of "transgender person" was "vague", arguing that this made it "impossible to identify the genuine oppressed persons to whom the benefits of the Act are intended to reach". It added that this existing definition renders several provisions "unworkable", further saying that this definition was "not compatible" with several statutory provisions enacted by both Parliament and State legislatures.

The government has argued that the intent of the legislative policy was always to "protect only those who face severe social exclusion due to biological reasons" for no fault or choice of their own. It went on to say that the purpose of the legislation was never to "protect each and every class of persons with various gender identities, self-perceived sex/gender identities or gender fluidities".

Noting these aspects, the government argued for a "precise" definition of transgender people, saying, "The protection and benefits that are provided under the Act are vast in nature, and therefore, care has to be taken that such identification cannot be extended on the basis of any acquirable characteristics or personal choice or claimed self-perceived identity of an individual."

THE GIST

- The Amendment Bill proposes removing the 'right to self-perceived gender identity' and introducing a new definition of a 'transgender person', focusing on socio-cultural identities, intersex variations, and congenital conditions.
- It introduces a medical board-led certification process, requires scrutiny by the District Magistrate, mandates a revised certificate after SRS, and expands provisions on offences and punishments.
- Transgender activists argue the changes contradict the NALSA judgment on self-determination of gender, could exclude sections of the community, and have been brought without consultation.

KARNATAKA CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED

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IFT No:KMF/ENGG/ M- dairy-RECD /02044/2025-26 Date: 18-03-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

[Two cover System] [Through KPP Portal only]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd, Bangalore invites Short term tender from the eligible suppliers / manufacturers through KPP-Portal for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested and reputed Suppliers/ Manufacturer who have handled similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and also contact **Help desk E-mail; hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com and helpline no. 080-25501227/ 25501216.**

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty.	EMD (Rs.)	Period of Completion
1	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Retrofitment Emission Control Device (RECD) to Different capacity of DG and related works at Mother Dairy, Yelahanka.	1 Job	1,75,000/-	5 months

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated: **20.03.2026 to 27.03.2026 upto 4.00 PM. 2.** Pre Bid Meeting Dtd: **25-03-2026. 3.** Last date for Tender submission on date: **27.03.2026 upto 4.00 PM. 4.** Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: **30.03.2026 at 4:30 PM.**

Hence forth changes / modification in the tender, It will be uploaded on KPPP portal only.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering-2]

Government of Karnataka
The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Hassan Division, Hassan.

No: EE/PWD/HSN/AE-3/2025-26/ DATED: 16.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 47/2025-26, Dated: 16.03.2026

Tender is invited by the Public Works Department on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000, Standard Tender Document KW-2, KW-3 & KW-4 from the eligible registered Contractors of Karnataka PWD and the contractors belonging to Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe, Category-1 & Category-2(A) shall be domicile of the State of Karnataka for more than 10 years. Tenders Invited through E-Procurement for total Number of 11 Works under PWD Hassan Division. In that 01 work is reserved for scheduled caste contractors, 01 work is reserved for scheduled Tribe contractors, 01 work is reserved for Category-1 contractors and 01 work is reserved for category-2(A) contractors. The minimum estimated amount is Rs.50.00 Lakhs and maximum estimated amount is Rs.200.00 Lakhs. The amount mentioned in tender notification is sanctioned estimated cost, but EMD & class of contractor is considered based on amount put to tender which excludes GST & other charges. Last date & time for receipt of tender is on 13.04.2026 @ 16.00 hours. For more details visit https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office through Phone No. 08172-268437 or in person during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Hassan Division, Hassan.

ವಾಸಾಸಂ೨/ಹಿಸನ/ಹಾಸನ/1204/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HUBBALLI

KMCRI/SUP(5)/Paediatric/Tender-01/552/2025-26 Dated 12.03.2026
KMCRI/SUP(5)/Paediatric/Tender-01/553/2025-26 Dated 17.03.2026
KMCRI/SUP(5)/Paediatric/Tender-01/554/2025-26 Dated 17.03.2026

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ)

ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ ಇವರು **ಅರ್ಹ ಟೆಂಡರದಾರರು, ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರು, ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಏಜೆಂಟ್ಸ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಧಿಕೃತ ವಿತರಕರಿಂದ ಕೆ.ಎಂ.ಸಿ.&ಆರ್.ಐ. ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗೆ ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುವ Paediatric ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ 1) HFNC + CPAP Units Instruments, 2) 20 Photo therapy Units (Both Under and Over Surface)** ಮತ್ತು **3) Paediatric & Nenonatal Bronchoscopy** ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಉಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು **ಪೂರೈಸುವುದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ** ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ 1999 ಶಾಸನ 2000 ಅನ್ವಯ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು, ಪ್ರೊಸೆಸಿಂಗ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **htpps://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಯು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ ನೀಡದೇ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ತಿರಸ್ಕರಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– (ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು)
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HUBBALLI

KMCRI/SUP(5)/MDRU/Tender-01/508/2025-26 Dated 17.03.2026

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ)

ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ ಇವರು **ಅರ್ಹ ಟೆಂಡರದಾರರು, ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರು, ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಏಜೆಂಟ್ಸ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅಧಿಕೃತ ವಿತರಕರಿಂದ ಕೆ.ಎಂ.ಸಿ.&ಆರ್.ಐ. ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗೆ ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುವ MDRU ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ 1) Semi Dry Blotting System, 2) Chemiluminescence imaging System for Western Blotting, 3) Brightfield binocular upright microscopes equipped with Fluorescence Filters, 4) Hybridization chamber for karyotyping and FISH workstation, 5) Side warner, 6) Magnetic Stirrer with hot plate, 7) Micro pipette set (set of 6 pipettes with pipette stand)** ಮೂಲಕ **ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಉಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸುವುದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ** ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ 1999 ಶಾಸನ 2000 ಅನ್ವಯ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು, ಪ್ರೊಸೆಸಿಂಗ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **htpps://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಯು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ ನೀಡದೇ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ತಿರಸ್ಕರಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– (ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು)
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ

KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

No. 16 C-1, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanthanagara,
Bengaluru-560052. Phone: 080-22268677/78/79 Fax: 080-22268667
Email: kerc-ka@nic.in Website: https://kerc.karnataka.gov.in

No: KERC/DD(A)/E-Court/2024-25/1753 Date: 17.03.2026

TENDER NOTICE

Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Bengaluru - 560052 invites Electronic Bids under Competitive Bidding from eligible Bidders / Agencies to **Supply, Install, Configure and Commissioning of Hardware including IT for Digital / E-Court Project at KERC** as per the Scope of Work and the Terms & Conditions as indicated in the tender document.

The soft copies of tender documents may be downloaded and submitted through e-Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** during the period **from 17.03.2026,12.30 pm onwards to 09.04.2026 before 11.00 am.**

For further information, please contact helpdesk phone number 080-22268677/78/79-extension No. 214/215 of KERC between 10.00 AM and 6.00 PM on working days.

Sd/- Tender Inviting Authority
DIPR/CP/YC/6334/2025-26 Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission

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KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD

3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPP portal)

Karnataka Housing Board has invited tenders KPP portal for Appointment of Project Management Consultants (PMC) for Construction of 2 Basement G+13 Multi-stories Apartment including Club House, Swimming Pool, Library, Indoor Games & Other allied works in **Sy.No. 205 at Bundemutt KHB Layout, Kengeri, Bengaluru Urban District.**

Notification No. **CE/Kengeri/PMC/Multi-storeyed Apartment/KHB/ 2025-26/SE0368, Date: 17.03.2026.**

Last date for submission of bid is on **02.04.2026 upto 4.00 pm.**

For further information, contact below mentioned Office Address:
Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru.
Telephone No.: 080-22273511
Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

DIPR/CP/YC/6342/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer, KHB, Bengaluru**

ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ
CHIKKABALLAPURA URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.

ಸಿಟ್ರಸ್ ಸಿಟಿ ಮೇಡೋಸ್, 4ನೇ ಸೆಕ್ಟರ್, ತುಮಕಲಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾಮ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ–562103. Sitrus City Meadows, 4th Sector, Tumakalahalli Village, B.B.Road, Chikkaballapur-562 103. Email ID:cuda.cbpur@gmail.com ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:08156–274701.

ಸಂ:ಚಿ.ನ.ಅ.ಪ್ರಾ/Tender/03/2025-26 DATE: 17.03.2026

Invitation for Tender

(For Lake Works –As per standard Bid Document KW 4 in two cover system.)

(1) The Commissioner, Chikkaballapur Urban Development Authority Invites Tenders from the eligible tenderers, for the construction of lake works detailed in the table below in Two cover document procedures as per KTPP rules 2000 shall be followed. **(2)** Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka e-procurment website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in **(3)** Tenders must be electronically submitted in e-procurement portal. **(4)** Further information, if required, can be obtained from the office of the Commissioner, Chikkaballapur Urban Development Authority during working hours **(5)** Head of account: Lake development Cess. **(1)** Pre-bid meeting on **24.03.2026, 12:00 AM (2)** submission of queries **24.03.2026, 12.00 AM (3)** Last date & Time for receipt of tenders: **01.04.2026 05:30 PM (4)** Date & Time for opening of Technical bid**: 04.04.2026, 11:00 AM (5)** Date & Time for opening of Financial bid: 04.04.2026, 04:00 PM or later. **Name of work: (1)** Development of Lake Bund, Entrance Arch and Toilets in Chitravathi Park by CUDA. (CKBUDA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT1/CALL-2). (Amount put to tender Rs.3,84,09,508.33). In case of Any change in calendar of events, it will be published in e-procurement portal only. No separate paper notification will be given.

Sd/- Commissioner,Chikkaballapur Urban Development Authority, Chikkaballapur
DIPR/CHIKKABALLAPURA/RO:498/KSMCA/2025-26

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, Zone-1, No. 2152/20, Defence colony, 9th Main, D Block, Sahakarnagara, BNCC Office, Bengaluru–560092

No.: BNCC-Z1/EE/BTP/KPPP/PR/06/2025-26 Date: 18.03.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bengaluru North City Corporation or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations. **(Standard Tender Document KW-4)**

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Balance work of under constructing BBMP Indoor Stadium at MCECHS Layout Byatarayanapura Constituency. **Est. Cost (Rs. in Lakhs): 500.00, EMD (in Rupees): 7,50,000/- (1.00 Lakhs through e-Payment (NEFT) balance Rs. 6,50,000/- through BG/FDR, should be submit before openening of Technical Bid).**

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents can be downloaded from the GOK KPPP website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. (2)** Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on **26.03.2026** at **3:00 p.m.** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, No. 2152/20, Defence Colony, 9th Main, D Block, Sahakarnagara, BNCC Office, Bengaluru-560 092. **(3)** Last Date for uploading the Filled proposals on **04.04.2026** up to **4:00 p.m. (4)** Date of Opening of Technical Bid is **06.04.2026** after **11:00 a.m. (5)** Date of Opening of Financial Bid after Approval of Technical Bid. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, Zone-1, BNCC

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIVISION, BELAGAVI.

PH NO.0831-2463850 / FAX NO.0831-2423008

No.EE /MI&GWDDD/BGM/TND/AE/2025-26/5915 Date:18-03-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-1, 2,3&4)

As per KTTP Act-2000 and recent Amendments the Executive Engineer Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Department Division Belagavi has invited the Item rate tender through KPPP (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in). Total 11 Nos. of Belagavi/Gokak/Athani Sub Divisions. Estimate Amount Highest Rs.202.00 Lakhs & Lowest Rs.3.40 Lakh. 1. For KW-4 work: Date of Pre-tender meeting:24-03-2025 at 11.00 AM, 2.Tender Receipt Last Date:25-03-2026 Evening 4.00 PM, 3. Tender Opening Date:26-03-2026 Evening 4.30 PM (if possible), 4. For Tender Details office address: Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Department Division Belagavi & www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/-Executive Engineer, M.I & GWDD Division, Belagavi.
DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-2120/KSMCA/2025-26

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division, 2nd Main, T.R. Mill Road, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru - 560018.

No: EE/CMP/TEND/E-PROC/23/2025-26 Date: 16-03-2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) - (SHORT TERM)

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division, BCCC, Zone-2, Bengaluru, invites Tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BCCC / KPWD / CPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Works detailed below. **(Standard Tender Document - KW-4)**

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Annual Maintenance of Storm Water Drains in Chamarajpet Constituency. **Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakhs) (including GST): 145.00, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 2.18**
2	Annual Maintenance of Arterial and Sub Arterial Roads including Footpath in Chamarajpet Division. **Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakhs) (including GST): 80.00, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 1.60**
3	Providing Pothole Filling in Ward No. 157, 158, 159 in Chamarajpet Sub Division. **Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakhs) (including GST): 60.00, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 1.20**
4	Providing Pothole Filling in Ward No. 153, 154, 155, 156 in J.J.R. Nagara Sub Division. **Estimated Amount (Rs. in Lakhs) (including GST): 80.00, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 1.60**

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 24-03-2026. 2)** Pre Bid Meeting will be held on **30-03-2026 at 11.00 AM. in the Office of the Chief Engineer (Central, Zone-2), Annex-3, GBA Head Office, Bengaluru - 560001. 3)** Tenders must be Submitted online through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **on or before 16.00 Hours on 04-04-2026. 4)** Technical Bids will be Opened on the Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in at the Office of the Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division on 06-04-2026 at 16.00 Hours.** Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division, BCCC.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of the general public that my clients **(1) Late T. Kausalya's legal heirs (2) Late Jagdish and Late P.Shanthi's Legal heirs and (3) Mr.T. Ramesh** are the absolute owners of the schedule mentioned property having inherited the same from Late Poopathiammal

The Hon'ble court was pleased to dismiss the case filed by the plaintiff Mr. F.Samraj and in favour of my client's the defendants (1) Late T.Kausalya (2) Late P Shanthi and (3) Mr. Ramesh in O.S.No. 4154-2013

It has been brought to the notice of my clients that some persons who are not connected to the schedule property have been trying to encumber the property by falsely representing that they are the rightful owners of the property the public are hereby cautioned not to enter in to any transaction with such persons pertaining to the schedule mentioned property, anybody entering in to transaction pertaining to the schedule mentioned property with unlawful persons shall be doing so at their own risk and cost for which my client's shall not be responsible or liable in any manner.

Public may inform Mrs Roseline. R with regard to any such unlawful activities to her Mobil.no.9986404317 or the undersigned advocate

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the immovable property being residential premises bearing New No.160 (Old No.142) situated at K. Kamaraj Road, Bangalore 560042, **Bounded on the**
East by : Private Property,
West by : Private Property,
North by : Municipal Lane,
South by : Private property,
Measuring
East : 30-00 feet,
West : 30-00 feet,
North : 33-06 feet,
South : 30-00 feet.

J. RAVINDRAN Advocate
No.310, 4th Cross, 6th Main, Viveknagar, Bangalore -560047. Mobile : 9900609429
Email : ravindran_jurist@yahoo.co.in

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Public Works Department)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Division: Yadgir.

GSTIN:29BLR002252F1DR

No.EE/PWD/Divn/YDG/TS-2 /e-Tender/2025-26/ 3512 Dated:18.03.2026

Short Term e-Tender Notification

1) Details of works: On behalf of Governor of Karnataka as per KTPP Amendment 1999-2000 Act 2000 Standard Bid Document KW-4 Karnataka Public Works Department invited item Rate Tender under KPPP Portal in Two Cover System from Eligible Agency/Contractors for following works Under 5054 KRDCL for the year 2025-26 Under Shahapur Taluka-(1)34297 and (2) 34298, Appendix-E (Plan) for the year 2025-26 Under Shahapur Taluka-1 (1)32497/Call-2 Totally 3 (Three) works Tender Called **2) Amount Put to Tender:** Miminimum Rs 380.00 Lakhs and Maximum Rs.500.00 Lakhs **3) Contractor Eligible Details:** Civil Class-II & Above **4) Tender Procesing Fee and EMD Details:** Tender Fee, EMD & Period as per kppp portal, **5) Last Date & Time for Tender Pre-Bid Meeting:** 23.03.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **6) Last Date & Time for Tender queries/Clarification:** 25.03.2026 (Upto 17.30 hrs) **7) Last Date & Time for Reciept of the tender in e-KPPP portal:**31.03.2026 (Upto 16.00 hrs) **8) Date & Time of Opening of the Tender/Technical Bid:** 01.04.2026 (16.30 hrs Onwards) **9) Date & Time of Opening of the Financial Bid:** 04.04.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **10) For More Details Contact:** Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division:Yadgir. **11) Website Address:** https://kppp. karnataka.gov.in

NOTE: Any Corrections / Changes will be updated in the kppp Portal only

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Yadgir.
DIP/YDG/602/KSMC&A/2025-26

GUJARAT ENERGY TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

GETCO

Registered & Corporate Office, Sardar Patel Vidyut Bhavan, Racecourse, VADODARA - 390 007
www.getcogujarat.com & https:www.nprocure.com

TENDER NOTICE NO. ACE (P&C): TN - 25: 2025-2026

[A] PROCUREMENT: E-3092:- Purchase of 66/ 132/ 220/ 400 kV Raised Chimney Stub Tower material against Tender No. ACE (P&C)/ I/ E-3092/ Tower Material/ ARC/ 2025-26.

[B] CIVIL: ACE (P&C)/ Contracts/ Civil- 598, 599, 600, 601:- (1) Construction of Administrative Office Building for Dhansura AM Division including electrification, e-Urja connectivity work, Furniture, Parking, RCC Road, etc. at 220 kV Dhansura SS Under Himatnagar Circle, **(2)** Construction of Compound wall, water sump, bore work, renovation of control room building including provision of ladies toilet, water proofing treatment and misc. civil work at 132 kV Nandesari S/s under Koyali Division under Jambuva Circle, **(3)** Construction of 1 No. of Type-III (G+3) residential quarters block with lift, including electrification works, septic tank, soak pit, RCC internal roads, parking shed, multipurpose area, and landscaping / garden development at 132 kV Mahemdabad S/s under Nadiad AM Division under Nadiad Circle, **(4)** Construction of Administrative Building (G+2) along with necessary amenities including Electrification, Plumbing, Fire safety system & other ancillary work for Asset Management Division & allied offices under Navsari Circle. (Phase -1).

[C] LINE: ACE (P&C)/ Contracts/ E-408, 422, 425/ TL/ UG/ 66kV, 132kV/ S&L,E:- (1) Supply, Laying, Erection, Testing and Commissioning 132kV 1Cx800sq mm 2*(3+0) XLPE U/G cable from 132kV Itola TSS to Termination tower DD+0 (route length 0.5 Rkms) & from 220 kV Jambuva S/s to Termination tower DD+0 (route length 1.250 RKms), **(2)** Supply, Laying, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 66kV,1CX630 sqmm XLPE Cable with Poly. Al. / Aluminium construction on EPC basis Various lines under Bharuch Circle, **(3)** Supply, Laying, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 132 kV D/C UG Cable line by laying of 132 kV, 800Sqmm (2x3) U/G Cable Line (route length – 1.0 km) from 220 kV Rupakheda (GETCO) S/s end to the switchyard of Proposed Dahod TSS (132 kV U/G Cable at 220 kV Rupakheda S/s end).

[D] SUBSTATION & LINE: ACE (P&C)/ Contract/ E-434/ 66 kV SS & OH TL/ Turnkey:- Supply, Erection, Testing, and commissioning of 66 kV equipment's & materials on Turnkey basis including civil works for 66 kV Substations and associated transmission lines (OH only) (Package-2 i.e., Amreli / Gondal / Jamnagar & Junagadh).

[E] ARC: ACE (P&C)/ Contract/ ARC EHVTR/ E-435:- Annual Rate Contract (ARC) for Dismantling, Loading, Unloading, Transportation, Erection, Testing & commissioning of EHV class (132/220/400 kV) Power Transformer & 220 / 400 kV Reactors at various sub stations of GETCO.

Above tenders are available on website **www.getcogujarat.com** (for view and download only) & **tender.nprocure.com** (For view, download and online tender submissions).

Note: Bidders are requested to be in touch with our website till opening of these tenders.

Date: 19/03/2026

I/c. Additional Chief Engineer (Procurement & Contracts)

ಆಹಾರ, ನಾಗರಿಕ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮತ್ತು ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಇಲಾಖೆ,

ಆಯುಕ್ತರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ನಂ.8, ಕನ್ನಿಂಗ್ ಹ್ಯಾಂ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಸಿಎಫ್ಎಸ್/ಐಟಿ–04/ಆರ್‌ಟಿ–ಟೆಂಡರ್/103/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:18.03.2026

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನೋಟಿಫಿಕೇಷನ್

2024–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಸಗಟು ಮತ್ತು ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ಸಾಗಾಣಿಕೆಗೆ ಆಸಕ್ತ ಅರ್ಹ ಬಿಡ್ಡುದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **ರಾಜ್ಯದ 11 ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕುಗಳಿಗೆ ಆಹಾರ ಧಾನ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು "ಎಫ್.ಸಿ.ಐ. ಗೋದಾಮುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಟಿ.ಎ.ಪಿ.ಸಿ.ಎಂ.ಎಸ್./ ಕೆ.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ.ಎಸ್.ಸಿ./ಇತರೆ ಸಗಟು ಗೋದಾಮುಗಳಿಂದ ರಸ್ತೆ ಮೂಲಕವಾಗಿ ಸಾಗಾಣಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಸದರಿ ಗೋದಾಮುಗಳಿಗೆ ಅನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಲು ಮತ್ತು "ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು ಗೋದಾಮುಗಳಿಂದ ಆಹಾರ ಧಾನ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ರಸ್ತೆ ಮೂಲಕವಾಗಿ ಸಾಗಾಣಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನ್ಯಾಯಬೆಲೆ ಅಂಗಡಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಅನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಲು** ಆಯುಕ್ತರು ಜ್ಞಾಪನ ಪತ್ರ ನೀಡಿದ ದಿನಾಂಕದಿಂದ ಡಿಸೆಂಬರ್–2026ರ ಅವಧಿಯವರೆಗೆ ಆಹಾರ, ನಾಗರಿಕ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮತ್ತು ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಆಸಕ್ತ ಬಿಡ್ಡುದಾರರು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ರಿಂದ **ದಿನಾಂಕ:18.03.2026 ರಿಂದ 02.04.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5.30ರವರೆಗೆ** ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದು.

ಪ್ರೀ–ಬಿಡ್ ಮೀಟಿಂಗ್ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23.03.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ,** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ (ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಕ್ನಿಕಲ್ ಬಿಡ್ಡನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು): **02.04.2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ,** ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ (ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ) : **04.04.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ,** ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ (ಆಯುಕ್ತರ ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ) : **10.04.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.**

ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರು ಸಗಟು ಸಾಗಾಣಿಕೆ **ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.4.00 ಲಕ್ಷ (ರೂ. ನಾಲ್ಕು ಲಕ್ಷ ಮಾತ್ರ)** ಮತ್ತು ಚಿಲ್ಲರೆ ಇಎಂಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ **ರೂ.2.00 ಲಕ್ಷ (ರೂ. ಎರಡು ಲಕ್ಷ ಮಾತ್ರ)** ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪ್ಲಾಟ್‌ಫಾರಂ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಾವತಿಸುವುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಅನ್ವಯ ಪ್ರೋಸೆಸಿಂಗ್ ವೆಚ್ಚವನ್ನು ಪಾವತಿಸುವುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಒಪ್ಪುವ ಸಮಿತಿಗೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯ ಯಾವುದೇ ಹಂತದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಪಡಿಸುವ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಿಶೀಲನೆಗೆ ಒಳಪಡಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಕಾಯ್ದಿರಿಸಿದೆ. ಇತರೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್‌ನಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಜಂಟಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು (ಐಟಿ & ಜಾಗೃತಿ)
ಆಹಾರ, ನಾಗರಿಕ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮತ್ತು
ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

ವಾಸಾಸಂ೨/ವಾಪ್ರ/ಜೆಎ/6341/2025–26

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

We, **RENUKA.D**, W/o Govindaraj. S, age 41 years and GOVINDARAJ. S, S/o Sri Samyappan, age 46 years, R/at No. 309, 1st Floor, 4th Avenue, Teacher's Colony, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560034, do hereby declare that both the names **G. AARADHANA** and **AARADHANA.G** refer to one and the same person who is our daughter, and henceforth she shall be known and called as **G. AARADHANA** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 16th March 2026, sworn before Advocate and Notary Public **S. VIJAYALAKSHMI** at Bangalore.

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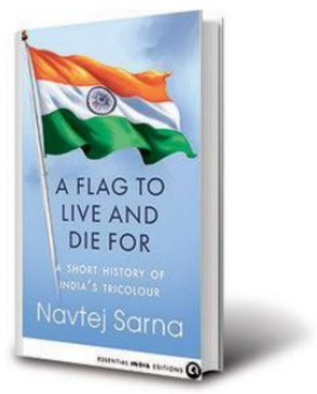
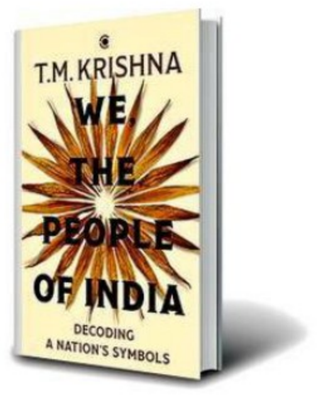




The national tricolour was not chosen on a whim; it evolved through several stages. PTI

India's national symbols under scrutiny over use, meaning, and law

A complaint against Hardik Pandya draws attention to the rules governing the national flag and the history embedded in it; as debates over *Vande Mataram* resurface, the discussion shows how national symbols evoke emotional responses while being shaped by law and historical tension

Ziya Us Salam

Last week, a Pune-based lawyer filed a complaint against cricketer Hardik Pandya for allegedly insulting the national flag during celebrations following India's victory in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Ahmedabad. According to the complaint, Pandya, who had the flag draped around his body, engaged in objectionable acts in the stadium.

The episode has once again drawn attention to the rules governing the use of the national flag and to the history and symbolism embedded in it.

Evolution of the tricolour

Recent books help us understand the story of the national flag. In *A Flag to Live and Die For – A Short History of India's Tricolour* (Aleph), diplomat and columnist Navtej Sarna traces the evolution of the flag across decades.

The national tricolour was not chosen on a whim. It evolved through several stages, dating back to 1907, when an early version was presented to Surendranath Banerjee, former Congress president, by Bhupendranath Dutt, the younger brother of Swami Vivekananda. Called the Calcutta Flag, it was designed by Sachindra Prasad Bose and Sukumar Mitra. "The design of the flag was inspired by the flag of the French Revolution. The flag had three horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green with eight half-open lotuses," writes Sarna.

Around the same time, Swami Vivekananda's disciple, Sister Nivedita, conceived a flag featuring the *vajra*, or thunderbolt. Sister Nivedita was a participant in the Swadeshi movement and the flag used religious and spiritual symbols to strike a chord with the masses.

The early decades of the 20th century saw more experimentation with the idea of the national flag. Many leaders of the freedom movement believed that Independence was around the corner and that a national flag could stir emotions in support of its attainment. Bhikaji Cama, a prominent figure in the Independence movement, unfurled a modified version of the Calcutta Flag in Stuttgart in 1907, thereby becoming the first Indian to hoist the Indian flag on foreign soil.

A new version of the flag emerged during Annie Besant's Home Rule movement. In 1917, she hoisted a flag with nine horizontal stripes – five red and four green – in Coimbatore. The effort was supported by several nationalist leaders.

In 1916, Pingali Venkayya, a freedom fighter, published his book *A National Flag for India*, outlining his ideas for a national emblem. Five years later, Mahatma Gandhi asked him to design a flag with the *charkha*, the spinning wheel that had become a powerful symbol of self-reliance. The tricolour as we recognise it today emerged through these iterations. During the Quit India Movement in 1942, the flag was to be hoisted by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. However, his arrest by the British meant that Aruna Asaf Ali performed the honours in Bombay.

However, as musician and writer T.M. Krishna notes in *We the People of India: Decoding a Nation's Symbols* (Context, Westland), it was not until 2004, in *Union of India v. Naveen Jindal*, that an Indian citizen's fundamental right to fly the national flag was formally recognised. However, there are detailed rules on how the national flag should be displayed, handled, and used, set out in the Flag Code of India, 2002. Insults to the flag are punishable under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, which prohibits burning, trampling, or improper display.

Explaining the power of a symbol, while speaking at The Hindu Lit for Life, Krishna said, "(When) you walk on the street, see a temple and you do a *namaskaram*, you respond to a symbol... Just recently, I was seeing the flag out of my hotel room in Hyderabad, and it was gorgeously fluttering, and it did something to me. Is it memory? Is it indoctrination? So, you're responding at an emotional level. The thing about symbolism is it's often an emotional activity."

Debating the national song

While the flag has recently taken centre stage, so has another national symbol, the national song. *Vande Mataram* has been a subject of debate in Parliament in recent times.

Krishna writes about the difference between the national anthem and the national song. "*Vande Mataram* was a cry for freedom against the tyranny of the British in Bengal... Historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya dates the song to between 1872 and 1875... The first two stanzas were penned during this period. The rest seems to have been written later when Bankim wrote his novel *Anandmath*..."

The debate over *Vande Mataram* involved Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1937, saying, "It is so evident that *Bande Mataram* is in praise of Goddess Durga...no Muslim will accept the ten-headed idol of goddess Durga as a symbol of their country."

This tension helped pave the way for *Jana Gana Mana*, described by Krishna as "a poetic mural that required meditation." He writes, "Long before the constitutional acceptance, Subhas Chandra Bose had named *Jana Gana Mana* the national anthem....Once *Jana Gana Mana* was designated as the national anthem, it transformed into a multi-layered, harmony-laden musical composition."

In the light of these debates, Krishna asks, "Should we treat *Vande Mataram* as one song? An idea worth exploring." His open-ended conclusion gives a certain immediacy in the light of the decision of the Union government in February, making it mandatory to sing the entire song in official functions and schools.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Few ideas have reshaped our understanding of life as profoundly as the theory of evolution, which showed that Earth's diversity is shaped by gradual change over time

Prathmesh Kher

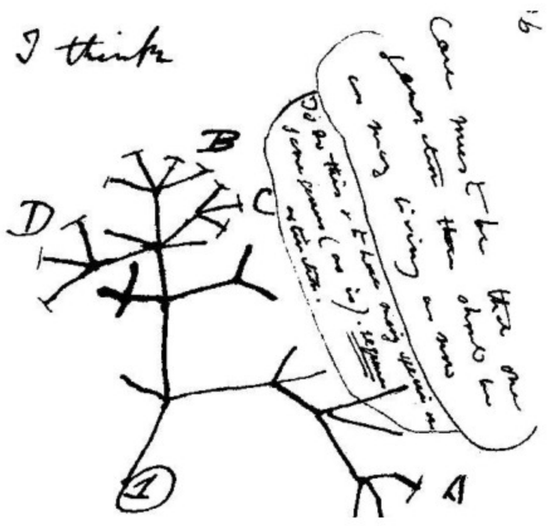
QUESTION 1
Darwin's observations of finches on which Pacific archipelago became central to discussions of adaptive radiation?

QUESTION 2
The famous 1925 American trial over the teaching of evolution in schools is known by what name?

QUESTION 3
Which fossil bird discovered in 1861 provided early evidence linking dinosaurs and birds?

QUESTION 4
Which term describes the integrated 20th-century framework that combined Darwinian evolution with Mendelian genetics?

QUESTION 5
What biological unit, later identified through the work of Gregor Mendel, carries hereditary information from one generation to the next?



Visual Question:
Identify this image from an 1837 publication.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. On this day in 2000, this leader was elected president of Taiwan. Name the leader. **Ans: Chen Shui-bian**
2. This American singer-songwriter and guitarist who was a leading and influential performer in rhythm-and-blues and rock-and-roll music, died at age 90 on this day. **Ans: Chuck Berry**
3. In 1990 on this day, two men pretending to be police officers stole 13 works. This happened in which country? **Ans: The U.S.**
4. In 1965 on this day, which Soviet cosmonaut became the first man to walk in space? **Ans: Aleksei Leonov**
5. Identify this British PM whose name is identified with the policy of appeasement toward Adolf Hitler's Germany. He was born on this day. **Ans: Neville Chamberlain**
Visual: Identify this American author who was born on this day in 1932. **Ans: John Updike**
Early Birds: Neil Lall | Sudhir Thapa | Pulkit Sathe | Swastika Prasad | Prem Nath Tiwari

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

Why are old people called "baby boomers"?
(S. S. Saravanan, Madurai)
I don't think "baby boomers" would like being called "old". Besides, not all old people are "baby boomers". You see, the word "baby boomers" is used in the U.S. and the U.K. to refer to people who were born in those countries between 1945 and the mid 1960s – i.e. after the Second World War. We read about the "baby boomer generation", and since this generation is getting somewhat long in the tooth, we think that all old people are "baby boomers". That is not the case, however. People born after the mid sixties are called "post boomers". Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi belong to this category. Are there any baby boomers in India? Considering the fact that the number of children born in this country never decreases, I guess we could say that we are all part of the baby boom generation.

Is it ok to say "repeat again"?
(Sudhaendhra P. Putty, Secunderabad)
It is common to hear people say, "Could you repeat that again, please?". When you ask someone to repeat something, you want him/her to say the same thing again. Therefore, it is unnecessary to say "again", again! (Ha! Ha!). Purists would prefer "Could you repeat that, please?" or "Could you say that again, please?".

What is the difference between "flammable" and "inflammable"? (V. Ramji, Annamalai, Tamil Nadu)
There is no difference; the two words can be used synonymously. Both flammable and inflammable can be used to refer to things that can easily catch fire. The "in" in "inflammable" is not a negative; the word does not mean something that cannot be easily set on fire.

Even native speakers have a problem with these two words. This is the reason why the official warnings in the U.S. and the U.K. simply read "flammable". I guess they want people to know that the substance they are dealing with is highly dangerous. The opposite of flammable is "nonflammable" and the opposite of inflammable is "noninflammable".

When you are referring to a person's temper however, you cannot use the word "flammable". You can only use the word "inflammable". When you say that someone's temper is inflammable, it means he/she is very excitable; he/she gets angry very quickly.

What is the meaning and origin of the expression "to give someone the cold shoulder"?
(Vinay, Bangalore)
When you give someone the cold shoulder, what you are doing is ignoring him/her.

The shoulder in the expression refers to inferior cut of meat. In the old days, it was the practice to give the shoulder of meat to servants; the landlords and their guests, on the other hand, dined on the best portions of meat. If however, a guest overstayed his welcome, the landlord gave him a hint that he should leave by getting his servant to serve the "cold shoulder" to him (the guest). When this cold shoulder was served to the unwanted guest, the landlord was never present at the dining table; he avoided the guest. Which is why the expression means what it does.
Published in The Hindu on December 21, 1999

Word of the day

Stupefy:
to surprise or shock somebody

Synonyms: stun, amaze, startle

Usage: *The heat seemed to stupefy everyone*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/stupefypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /stju:pɪfaɪ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

SEC eyes schools to drive voter turnout in Bengaluru civic polls

The move follows repeated poor voter turnout in elections; in the 2015 BBMP elections, the turnout was less than 50%, and in the 2010 elections, it was 45%

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Taking a leaf out of campaigns across the country to encourage people to vote, the State Election Commission is planning to launch a unique awareness campaign targeting the city's households through schools and colleges for the upcoming Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections.

G.S. Sangreshi, State Election Commissioner, in conversation with *The Hindu* on Tuesday, said that they are planning to rope in school and college students to encourage their parents by signing a "pledge letter" that they will vote.

"I travelled to Maharashtra for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls and to other States across the country to study the campaign strategies they have adopted to increase turnout. Once the final voter roll is out, we will tailor awareness campaigns that are suitable for us (GBA)," he said.

SEC G.S. Sangreshi says they are planning to rope in school and college students to encourage their parents by signing a 'pledge letter' that they will vote. K. MURALI KUMAR

The move follows repeated poor voter turnout in elections. In the 2015 Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) elections, the turnout was less than 50%, and in the 2010 elections, it was 45%.

"In panchayat elections, the turnout touches 90 to 95%, and most of them have an average of 85% turnout, with a neck-and-neck fight among candidates. But in Bengaluru, we see fewer than 35 lakh voters coming out to vote, which needs to change," he said.

Pledge forms

In the new plan that the SEC is considering, schoolchildren will be given a pledge sheet to take home. This sheet will require a formal signature from parents, serving as a written promise to their children that they will cast their vote in the upcoming elections.

However, this is not a new concept, although in Karnataka it is being taken up for the first time. In Maharashtra, local body elections, similar methods have been in practice for more than a decade. Delhi, too, has adopted similar methods earlier.

Midweek poll

Mr. Sangreshi acknowledged that one of the major concerns is the private sector not announcing a day off for employees to vote. "We have been thinking about this seriously, and we will see how we can work with the private sector to ensure a day off," he said.

When asked whether they were planning to hold polls midweek, he said they would consider it, as it can boost voter turnout. "If we hold elections towards the weekend, most people will plan a trip and even leave the city on the election day itself," the Commissioner said.

Further, the SEC is planning to bring out a quarterly magazine titled "Power of Vote" to raise awareness.

Deadline for sleeper bus safety compliance extended

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Transport Department has revised the deadline for private bus operators to implement upgraded safety standards in sleeper and semi-sleeper buses, following a series of fire-related incidents.

The new deadline has been set for March 31, 2026.

Earlier, operators were required to comply with these regulations by February 28. The department had issued strict instructions to bus owners and body builders across the State to adhere to prescribed safety norms for sleeper coaches, acting on directives from the National Human Rights Commission and recommendations by the Central Institute of Road Transport.

In an official statement released on Wednesday, the Department confirmed that additional time has been granted to ensure full compliance with the rules.

Operators have been directed to follow NHRC road safety guidelines, which outline eight compulsory safety measures. They must also submit comprehensive compliance reports detailing vehicle registration numbers, category, registering authority, investigating officer information, and relevant case references.

BJP seeks extension of deadline of GBA electoral roll verification

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Party cites a six-day disruption of the voter verification website from March 13 due to technical issues and says it caused significant inconvenience to citizens

R. Ashok

R. Ashok, Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, and other BJP leaders on Wednesday urged the State Election Commission to extend the deadline for verifying draft electoral rolls and filing objections for the GBA elections.

They cited a six-day disruption of the voter verification website from March 13 due to technical issues, and said that it caused significant inconvenience to citizens attempting to access the rolls.

"The draft electoral rolls were received at our office on March 16, and require more time for thorough verification. With the next three days being holidays due to festivals, many people will be travelling to their native places, making it difficult to carry out the verification process," the BJP said.

Citing upcoming festival holidays and travel, the BJP sought an extension of the objection deadline from March 20 to 30 to safeguard voters' rights.

NABL accreditation secured

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Department of Microbiology in Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) has secured accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) for a period of four years, marking a significant milestone for the institution.

Asima Banu, who heads the Department of Microbiology, said the accreditation, granted under the medical testing category, will be valid till 2030.

The department, which has been providing laboratory services for several years, has expanded its testing capabilities substantially over the past decade.

After New York and Beijing, Berlin opens its third international office in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The inauguration of the office comes eight months after Berlin signed a MoU with Karnataka to further start-up growth and facilitate innovation and talent exchange

The State of Berlin opened a representative business office in Bengaluru on Wednesday, the first such office in India and the third globally after New York and Beijing.

The inauguration of the office comes eight months after the capital city of Germany signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Karnataka to further start-up growth in both cities and facilitate innovation and talent exchange.

"The Berlin office in Bengaluru is part of our decision to be present here continuously," said Franziska Giffey, Mayor of Berlin and Senator/Minister for Economic Affairs, Energy and Enterprises.

Export increase to India

"The focus would be inbound, outbound, and talent," Ms. Giffey said, elaborating that the office would support talent migration from India to Germany or Indian students who wish to study in Germany and companies from either of the countries who wish to invest in the other.

According to her, the Indian population in Berlin has risen significantly, which has gone up from around 2,000 a decade ago to around 45,000 currently.

She noted that exports from Berlin to India witnessed a significant rise in 2025. "Berlin's average export increase was 6% last year, whereas to India the exports increased by 21%," she said.

Berlin's imports from India totaled €285 million last year, compared to €169 million in exports to India during the same period, she added.

Start-up cities

Emphasising the parallels between Bengaluru and Berlin, Ms. Giffey observed that Bengaluru is regarded as the Silicon Valley of India, and Berlin as that of Germany.

"Our target is to become the most innovative place in Europe. We want to be at the forefront of international competition. For that, we have to broaden our mind, which means not just limit our focus to the United States or European countries, but also work with the Asian market and partners," she said.

Berlin hosts the largest start-up ecosystem in Germany with about 6,000 start-ups that employ around 1,00,000 people.

"When we looked at which city was the best fit for Berlin, we felt Bengaluru could be a strong partner. There is the potential for cooperation in key technology areas and innovation. Then there is also the aspect of our demographic change on the one hand and India's very young population on the other. We also see the potential for economic growth," Ms. Giffey said.

22 bike riders booked for performing wheelie; police warn of strict action in future drives

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The K.R. Puram Traffic Police have registered cases against 22 two-wheeler riders for performing dangerous "wheelie" stunts on city roads during Shab-e Khadr, a holy night during the month of Ramzan.

According to police, a special enforcement drive was conducted on Tuesday to curb reckless riding. The operation was carried out along key stretches including Old Madras Road, Bhattarahalli Junction, and near Medahalli Bridge under the K.R. Puram traffic limits.

Multiple junctions

During the drive, police personnel stationed at multiple junctions identified riders performing wheelie and other risky manoeuvres.

A total of 22 riders and their two-wheelers were detained on the spot.

Subsequently, 22 separate FIRs were registered against the offenders. Police stated that all accused are adults, and legal action has been initiated under relevant provisions of the law.

Officials reiterated that such stunts pose serious risks to public safety and warned of strict action against violators in future drives.

Timings
BENGALURU

THURSDAY, MAR. 19	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:30
RISE 06:23	SET 18:51
FRIDAY, MAR. 20	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:30
RISE 07:05	SET 19:47
SATURDAY, MAR. 21	
RISE 06:23	SET 18:30
RISE 07:49	SET 20:45

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	20
Mysuru	35	20
Bengaluru	33	22

Bengaluru Today
33°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be slight cool.

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THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public is hereby notified that my clients **Mr. K.A. Suresh & Mr. K.A. Nagaraja,** have lost/ misplaced the Original Allotment letter No.038094 dated 03-February-2004 issued by BDA in favor of **Mr. Ravi Prakash, S/o Siddappa** in respect of Site No. 630 measuring 6X9 mtrs, situated at IV H Block, F.E of BSK VI Stage, Bangalore. In this regard they have filed police complaint vide lost report No. 2113443/2026 dated 17.03.2026.

Founders of the said original allotment letter kindly contact the undersigned within 05 (Five) days from the date of this notice.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 17.03.2026 Sd/-

Chandar K Vittal, Advocate
#130, 8th Main road, AGS Layout,
Arehalli, Bengaluru-560061.
Contact No: 72594 95959

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar - 841221

E-Open Tender Notice No: S/RWP/E/ 2025-26/23 dated : 17.03.2026. Principal Chief Materials Manager/Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the **President of India** invites **online "e-Open Tender"**, through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website www.ireps.gov.in, for supply of following Stores item at RWP/Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs. **S.N. 1. Tender No.** 01265032. **Short Description of item:** Design, Supply, erection, testing, commissioning, and proving out of 132/11KV,10MVA. **Quantity:** 01 Set. **Date of tender Opening / Closing:** 06.04.2026 at 14:00 Hrs. **S.N. 2. Tender No.** 01261137. **Short Description of item:** Cast Iron Slag Pot. **Quantity:** 12 Nos. **Date of tender Opening / Closing:** 16.04.2026 at 14:00 Hrs. 1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is **www.ireps.gov.in**. 2. The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including **Addendum/ Corrigendum/Cancellation** with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in all the concerned newspapers.

Dy. PCMM/RWP/Bela
RWP/CPRO/ADVT/2025-26/123

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar 841221

E-Tender Notice No. 11/RWP/Engg./ 2025-26/WT/(Open) Date:-17.03.2026

The Dy. CE/RWP/Bela for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Online **"e-Open Tender"** through Indian Railways E-procurement portal (IREPS) **www.ireps.gov.in** for the following works as detailed :- **(1) Name of the work and Location Approximate cost, Earnest money and Completion period of the work :** Tender No.18_RWP_Engg_25_26_WT_ Open, **Name of Work:-** Development of plantation and other horticulture activities at RWP/Bela. **Approximate cost-** Rs. 6,58,48,089/-, **Tender form Cost-** Nil, **Earnest money-** Rs. 13,17,000/-, **Completion period of the work -** 24 Months **(2) Tender closing date and time :** 07.04.2026 upto 14:30 Hrs. **(3) Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be obtained and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. :** The above tender can be submitted only by the date and time as mentioned in the notice. For full details and submission of bid kindly visit Portal (IREPS) **www.ireps.gov.in.** The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with IREPS Portal (www.irpes.gov.in) for updates including Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation with respect to the above tender because no such any notice/information concerned that shall be published in newspaper.

Dy. Chief Engineer /Rail Wheel Plant-Bela
RWP/CPRO/Advt./2025-26/124

Government of India
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India
3rd Floor, Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport,
New Delhi-110003

Invitation of applications for hiring of Consultant (Rajbhasha) (Total one (01) post) in Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) invites applications from eligible candidates as Consultant (Rajbhasha) (Total one (01) post) for attending work as per Terms of Reference (TOR). Candidate with requisite qualification and experience as prescribed would be hired in the respective category as per vacancy indicated. Vacancies are liable to be changed without any prior notice and without assigning any reason whatsoever.

2. The details including eligibility criteria, Terms of Reference (TOR) etc. are available in vacancy notice published on the AERA's website: www.aera.gov.in Last date of receipt of application is **08.04.2026 upto 5.30 P.M**. Applications to be submitted as per details/mode mentioned in the vacancy notice. Applications received after due date and time will not be entertained.

Deputy Chief
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India, 3rd Floor,
Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi – 110003

CBC 03112/12/0023/2526

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking – Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
1st & 2nd Floor, Tower-A, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi 110 029
Website: www.nhidcl.com **Email: helpdesk.ypep1@nhidcl.com**

Hiring Notice No. 04/2026

NHIDCL invites online applications from eligible experienced and qualified Indian Citizens for the following positions for fixed tenure.

Sl. No.	Area	Level	Number of Vacancies	Maximum Age	Experience	Remuneration
1	Construction Management	Associate	04	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
2		Sr. Associate	04	40	2-9	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000
3		Consultant	02	45	9-15	Rs. 1,50,000-2,75,000
4	Technical	Associate	04	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
5		Sr. Associate	04	40	2-9	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000
6		Consultant	02	45	9-15	Rs. 1,50,000-2,75,000
7	Human Resources	Associate	02	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
8		Sr. Associate	02	40	2-9	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000
9	Finance	Associate	04	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
10		Sr. Associate	02	40	2-9	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000
11		Consultant	01	45	9-15	Rs. 1,50,000-2,75,000
12	Legal	Associate	02	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
13		Sr. Associate	01	40	9-15	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000
14	Information Technology	Associate	02	30	0-2	Rs. 70,000-80,000
15		Sr. Associate	01	40	9-15	Rs. 80,000-1,50,000

How to apply: 1. Visit the official NHIDCL website: **www.nhidcl.com**

2. Navigate to Resource pool portal "Current Vacancies 2026-Apply online"

Important Dates:

Commencement of Online Application: 18th March, 2026.

Closing Date for Online Application: 14th April, 2026.

The crucial date for age determination is the date of issue Engagement Advertisement.

Selection Process:
The Selection shall be based on internally constituted Screening Committee and Selection Committee. Evaluation criteria shall be decided by the above committee and may include written test, personal interview, group discussion etc.,

Period of Engagement: The period of engagement shall be for a fixed period 2 (two) years which may be extended by 1 (one) year upto a maximum tenure of 3 (three) years.

For any query/updates visit NHIDCL website regularly.

Executive Director (HR)

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDING THE NATION

CBC 37112/15/0016/2526

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

A BG-BGE

Social service and community development walkathon

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Around 250 NCC cadets from various institutions took part in a social service and community development walkathon, along with a skit-based awareness programme, organised recently by the NCC Unit of Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences. The event was sponsored by the 40 Karnataka Battalion of NCC. Registrar S. Ashok Rao (MSRUAS), Administrative Officer Lt. Col. Vipin Dhillon attended the programme.

Traffic advisory for Id prayers on March 21

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

According to officials, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Muslims are expected to gather for prayers. FILE PHOTO

In view of the large-scale Id prayers scheduled on March 21, the traffic police in Bengaluru have announced extensive traffic restrictions along Mysore Road and surrounding areas.

According to officials, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people are expected to gather for prayers at a mosque near B.B. Junction on Mysore Road and at the BBMP playground in Chamarajpet.

The restrictions will be in force on Saturday from 7 a.m. until the completion of prayers.

Police said that vehicular movement of all types will be completely prohibited on Mysore Road between Tollgate Junction and Town Hall via B.B. Junction, including movement over the BGS Flyover. Similarly, traffic from Town Hall towards Mysore via the same stretch will also be restricted.

The police have urged the public to plan their travel in advance and cooperate with authorities to ensure smooth conduct of the prayers.

From Page One

30 families get land titles; none from Old Fakir Colony

During the same month, these families were called to Hajj Bhavan, where they met senior officials from the Housing and Minority Welfare Departments and submitted documents including bank passbooks, domicile, income and caste certificates, ration cards, Aadhaar, and voter ID cards.

An independent survey conducted by an NGO that has worked with residents for several years found that nearly 170 families were living in Fakir Colony and Waseem Layout before the demolitions carried out on December 20, 2025. The survey documented 167 houses being demolished – 47 in Fakir Colony (Old), 38 in Fakir Colony (New), and 82 in Waseem Layout, affecting 192 heads of families. Despite this, none of the 47 families from Old Fakir Colony have received houses, even though residents say they possess the same basic documents as those who were allotted land titles.

Housing Dept. officials say the exclusions could be due to some families not applying under the Ashraya Yojana, or because the Ashraya Committee may have rejected certain applications due to missing documents

Housing Department officials said the exclusions could be due to some families not applying under the Ashraya Yojana, or because the Ashraya Committee, which takes the final decision based on submitted documents, may have rejected certain applications due to missing documents or paperwork. The official did not comment further on whether more land titles will be distributed at a later stage or not.

Residents, however, disputed this, saying they were told that families from New Fakir Colony had "residence certificates". They added that at least six families in Old Fakir Colony possess such certificates, while others have submitted documents such as Aadhaar cards, ration cards, and voter ID cards.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTH CENTENARY

CENTENARY REMEMBRANCE

SHRI. V. R. DURAIRAJAN
Retd. The Hindu, Chennai.
19.03.1926 - 09.06.1982
Inserted by
Family Members

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST YEAR REMEMBRANCE

Srimathi Bhanumathi Balasubramanian
Minutes passed, hours passed, days passed, weeks passed, months passed and now a year has passed too.
But not a single second passes without your thoughts!
— Fondly remembered by —
P. A. Balasubramanian
Satheesh, Ramya, Dhrithi, Dikshant
Harish (98400 60739)

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of my client Sri.Pradeep Kumar Katta to bring to the notice of the general public that the Page No. 11 of Original Sale Deed dated 03.01.2005 Registered as document No.39363/2004-05 in respect of Site No.40, measuring 1200 Sq.ft., situated at Vaddarapalya Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore has been lost at the time of travelling.
All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said Page No.11 of Original Sale Deed. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days from this present along with that Police Complaint is also given vide Lost Report No.2115676/2026, dated 18.03.2026.

Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor,
5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar
2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients intend to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from its owner **Saraswathamma, alias Saraswathamma B.R alias B. Saraswathi, W/o. Late B T Raghuram,** r/at No.6, 1st Main road, HIG KHB Colony, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore-560 079.
It is hereby informed to the general public that any person/bank/financial institutions etc., having any claim, charge, mortgage, right, title and interest etc., in respect thereof in the said property or any part thereof may notify to the undersigned along with proof of such claims/objections to such sale within **7 days** from this day, failing which my client will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property assuming that there are no claims, right or interest.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the property bearing **Site no.6/5,** (Old Municipal No.5 and PID No. 18-11-5) presently having EPID No.8924268730 issued by BBMP, (previously Khaneshumari No.851 of Kamakshipalya Gramatana, Saneguruvanahalli Dhakale, Yeshwanthur Hobli Bengaluru North Taluk) Situated at **1st Main Road, Meenakshinagar, BBMP Ward no.101 (Kamakshipalya), Basaveshwaranagar, Bengaluru- 560 079,** measuring East to West **50 feet,** North to South **30 feet** totally measuring **1500 sq.ft.,** and bounded on:
East by : Road, West by : Private Property, North by : Private Property, South by : Private Property

CHIDANANDA.P, Advocate
TARKA LEGAL,
No.15/1, (Old No.601),
3rd Main, (Opp. Swimming Pool),
Sadashivanagar, Bangalore-560 080
Mobile: 9845112957

Indian Overseas Bank
Information Technology Department
Central Office: 763, ANNA SALAI, CHENNAI-600002

Indian Overseas bank (IOB) invites bids for the following:

GOVERNMENT E-MARKET PORTAL - Renewal of IBM Websphere & MQ licenses on subscription basis for a period of three years.

BID NO: GEM/2026/B/7362284
DATED 16.03.2026

The Above GEM Tender document is also available and can be downloaded from the following websites **www.iob.bank.in** & **www.gem.gov.in** For Tender details and future amendments, if any, keep referring to the following website **www.gem.gov.in**

Land Ports Authority of India
(A statutory body under Ministry of Home Affairs, Border Management-II, Government of India)
Appointment of Member (Planning & Development) in the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)

Applications are invited by the Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to fill up the post of **Member (Planning & Development)** of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI), under the Land Port Authority of India Act, 2010 (31 of 2010).

2. The details and other terms & conditions are available on the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs at http://mha.gov.in and http://lpai.gov.in
3. Last date for receiving applications is 13th April, 2026 (applications received after this date will not be considered).
4. Address for sending applications is as below:

Shri Ajay Kumar Sah,
Under Secretary (ICP),
Room No. 20,
2nd Floor, Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium,
Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs
New Delhi-110001.
Email- akash.sah@nic.in

CBC 19142/11/0020/2526

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक punjab national bank
...the name you can BANK upon!

BANGALORE CIRCLE : 1ST Floor Raheja Tower, 26-27 M G Road, Bengaluru-560001, Mail Id: cobangeastgad@pnb.bank.in, Mob: 9945568435

PREMISES REQUIRED - CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum to the publication dated **18.03.2026** in this Newspaper The clause **"For Zonal Office (and ZAO) in Bangalore : carpet area 7500 sft+/- 10%"** "ground floor with ramp or upto III floor with lift facility"
May be read as:

"For Zonal Office in Bangalore : carpet area 5500 sft+/- 10%
For ZAO in Bangalore : carpet area 2000 sft+/- 10%"
" ground floor with ramp or in other floors with lift facility"
Bidders may also apply for above mentioned carpet areas individually. However preference will be given for premises with combined carpet area of **7500+/- 10%** sft . If the same person is applying for more than one premises, each bid is to be given separately.
All other terms and conditions as per publication **dated 18.03.2026** and documents in website (**www.pnb.bank.in**) remain the same.

Date : 19.03.2026 **CIRCLE HEAD, Bangalore Circle**

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Central Offices, Stores and Purchase Dept, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560 027

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 12 Dated:15.03.2026

Tenders (Pre-qualification and or (Commercial offers) through e-procurement portal **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** are invited for supply of the following Goods/ Services.

Tender Nos. as per E-portal	Nomenclature of Items/ Services/ Equipment	Tender Value in Crores Rs. (Approx)	Last date for submission of tender
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0278	Procurement of Tabs	0.07	06.04.2026
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0277	Procurement of Bus Body Building items- Sending Disc, Tape, Switches	0.49	06.04.2026
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0276	Procurement of Bus Body Building items-Hinges, Door Locks & Rivets	0.49	06.04.2026
	SHORT TERM TENDER		
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0275	Procurement of Pre cured Tread Rubber and allied materials	10.05	26.03.2026
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0273	Procurement of Desktop Computers, Laser printers, Dot matrix printers and Laptops	5.00	23.03.2026
KSRTC/2025-26/IND0274	Procurement of Liquid Urea	8.00	26.03.2026

NOTE: Interested suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log into **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** In case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell (Phone. No. 080-46010000/080-68948777). Interested bidders may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to **support@eprochelpdesk.com** for further information if required. In case of bidders need assistance from KSRTC, can communicate at **cosp@ksrtc.org** (contact: 7760990224).

Sd/-
Controller of Stores & Purchases
(Tender Inviting Authority)

DIPR/CP/JA/6339/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
DIVISION KOPPAL. Phone No:08539-222318.email:eepwdkpl2@gmail.com

IFT No. PWD:DK:TDR: 2025-26: 4690 **Date: 18-03-2026.**

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division Koppal invites tenders from the eligible tenderers as per standard bid documents on http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Portal. Head of Account: 8443 Deposit Contribution, 5054-80-190-0-01-132 KRDCL Capitel Expenditure, 3054 SH Maintenance and 3054 MDR Maintenance / 2025-26. Two cover Tender procedure as per Rule 28 of the KTPP Act shall be followed. For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours on Phone No. 08539 – 222318 and all informations regarding tenders can be had from website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Total No of Works:04(Work Indent No: 31656, 34218, 0800 & 692) Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders **30-03-2026** Time 16.00 (Sl No. 1 to 4), Date and Time for opening of Technical Bid **01-04-2026** Time 11.00 (Sl No. 1 to 2), Date and time for opening of Tender Opening (Sl No. 2 to 4) and Date and Time for opening of Financial Bid **06-04-2026** Time 11.00 (Sl No. 1 to 2). Estimate Amount Minimum **Rs. 12.00** Lakhs & Maximum **Rs. 985.00** Lakhs respectively. The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address, EMD, Time for Tender Queries/Clarification, Date of Financial Bid Opening, Date & Other information as mentioned in KPPP Portal. Note: A separate paper notification will not be issued in case of re-inviting of above mentioned tenders, any changes either in tender date or any other condition tenderers can view in http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal.

DIPR/Koppal/762/KSMCA/2025-26

Sd/- EE, PWD Division, Koppal

Government of India
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL BANGALORE (DRT 2)
Govenment of India Ministry of Finance Department of Financial Services Debt Recovery Tribunal - II Karnataka (Bengaluru)
4th Floor, Telephone House, Raj Bhavan Road
Bengaluru Pincode -560 001

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the publication of demand notice dated **11th March 2026** issued by the Hon'ble Recovery Officer-II, Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Bangalore, in the case of **Union Bank of India Vs. Sri. Siddaraju,** it is hereby notified that the case details were inadvertently mentioned incorrectly. The case number was published as **RC No. 1102/2024 in OA No. 1375/2020,** instead of **RC No. 1102/2024 in OA No. 1113/2018** which is incorrect. Henceforth it may be read as **RC No. 1102/2024** in **OA No. 1113/2018.** All the parties concerned are requested to take note of the above correction.

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/194-2025-26

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM Two Bid system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) / Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-09/0326_TKC1 RFx No. 7000039247 (5th Call) for Work of replacement of existing 0.2 Panther ACSR conductor by equivalent HPC (High Performance Conductor) along with suitable hardware, accessories and equipment for 132kV Pimperkhed-Chalisgaon Line (line length : 36.80 ckm) along with replacement of EHV equipments at 132kV Pimperkhed & 132kV Chalisgaon S/Stn under EHV PC O&M Zone, Nashik	Rs. 1951.10 (Incl. GST) Rs. 1653.47 (Excl.GST) 25,000.00+GST	30.03.2026 Upto 18:00 Hrs 30.03.2026 At 18.05 Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (Gr-TKC1)
CPA, C.O. MSETCL, 1st Floor, Prakashgad Building, Bandra (E), Mumbai. Tel. No.: 022-69852717
Email id: cecpa@mahatransco.in, secpa@mahatransco.in, eepc@mahatransco.in, eetkc1cpa@mahatransco.in
For further details visit our website https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/
Any further amendments/clarifications will be published on the MSETCL website **www.mahatransco.in.** & **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/ .** Bidders are therefore requested to check these websites for further updates.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase the Schedule property from its owner **SRI.NIRMAL JAIN** S/o late Premraj Jain, residing at: No.11, Jolly Apartment, N.S.Iyengar Street, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru – 560020.
Apart from the said owner, if any other person/s have any manner of claim or interest or demand over the Schedule property or any part thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption or otherwise howsoever, they are hereby requested to file their objection/s (along with the photocopies of the documents on which they are relying), with the undersigned within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the vacant residential property bearing Municipal No.30/29, PID No.46-24-30/29, E.PID No.5735678600, admeasuring 13,637 Sq.ft, situated at Devanathachar Street, Chamarajapet, Bengaluru and bounded on:
East by : 15ft Passage
West by : Road/Government land and Private property
North by : Road
South by : Road

Sd/- S.F. GOUTAM CHAND, Advocate,
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES,
No.60, 2nd Floor, Old Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bengaluru - 560004.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
(A Government Of India Undertaking)

Regional Office :
Mandya, No. 4 F, Vivekananda Nagar,
Chikka Mandya Kere, Mandya - 571401
Email id : recmandyaro@canarabank.com

GOLD E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned persons are hereby informed that they have failed to pay off the liability in the loan accounts. Notices sent to them by Registered Post have been returned undelivered, to the Bank. They are therefore requested to pay off the liability and other charges and redeem the pledged securities on or before **26-03-2026** failing which the said securities will be sold by the Bank in public E-auction at the cost of the borrower through **www.gerpegov.com/canarabank** on **27-03-2026** or on any other convenient date thereafter without further notice, at the absolute discretion of the Bank.

SL. No.	Date Of Loan	Loan Number & Branch	Name and Address of the Borrower	Gold Loan Liability
1	17-08-2022	180102264026 MANDYA	MAHESHA K T S/O LATE THIMMAIAH, #432, 1ST CROSS, KARASAVADI ROAD, HOSAHALLI, MANDYA 571401	44,306.00
2	05-09-2022	180107476030 MANDYA	MAHESHA K T S/O LATE THIMMAIAH, #432, 1ST CROSS, KARASAVADI ROAD, HOSAHALLI, MANDYA 571401	1,14,489.00
3	21-10-2025	180440472881 KANAKAPURA	SURESH S S/O SIDDEGOWDA, PUTTE GOWDANA DODDI VILLAGE, GUTHALAHUNASE POST, KANAKAPURA 562117	83,590.00

The said auction is on the following conditions:
1) It is 'as is where is' condition.
2) The successful bidder shall pay the entire bid amount at once with in 3 days and take delivery of the ornaments at his/her absolute risk and responsibility and the said bidder shall not have any recourse to our Bank for any reason whatsoever.
3) The Bank reserves its right to put to auction all or any of the ornaments pledged in the account as considered necessary or stop auction at any time without any prior notice and at its absolute discretion.
4) The Bank has absolute discretion to either reject or accept any bid without assigning any reasons whatsoever.
5) The Bank has right to adjourn/postpone the auction sale at any stage to any future date at the convenience of the Bank and no person shall be entitled to claim any prior notice or right therefore.
6) If the successful bidder does not clear the bid amount and/or does anything which may give rise to a necessity of adjourning/postponing/holding fresh auction sale, he/she shall be liable to indemnify the Bank to the extent of loss, if any, caused on account of his/her lapses which may come in the way of completing the auction.
7) Last date for Depositing EMD: **26-03-2026 by 4.00 P.M**, EMD has to be deposited to the respective branch.
8) If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price within the period stated above, the deposit made by him shall be forfeited by the Bank without any notice and gold shall forthwith be put up for sale again.

Date : 19-03-2026
Place : Mandya

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Canara Bank

Government of Karnataka
DEPARTMENT OF MINES & GEOLOGY
#49, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560001
E-mail: dir-mines@karnataka.gov.in

No. DMG-17012/26/2025/2025-26 **Dated: 18.03.2026**

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Department of Mines and Geology is calling tender for auction of seized generated iron ore fines under respective notification through MSTC.
Eligibility conditions, terms and conditions, date and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Separate Lot wise auction notifications are published in MSTC portal. Tender Documents, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process of respective lots shall be available in electronic form only at the website of MSTC Ltd.

https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/aucsearch/search.jsp

The auction of generated iron ore fines for each lot is "AS IS WHERE IS AND NO COMPLAINT BASIS". The interested bidders shall ascertain the quantity and quality of the Iron ore before participation. The Department is not responsible for any dispute arising after confirmation of the bid.
Interested bidders may visit the MSTC Ltd website.

Sd/-
Director,
Department of Mines & Geology

DIPR/CP/6355/NR/2025-26

GATI SHAKTI VISHWAVIDYALAYA
(A Central University under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India)
Lalbaug, Vadodara, Gujarat - 390004

GSV/ADM/FP/AV/CHAIR/2026/01 **March 19, 2026**

AMAZON CHAIR PROFESSOR

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) is a Central University established by an Act of Parliament to be a pioneer in the domain of Transport and Logistics education in India, with a unique mandate to create a resource pool of best-in-class professionals for the entire transportation sector across technology, management and policy comprising multidisciplinary teaching, executive training and research.

Applications are invited for the prestigious position of **AMAZON - Chair Professor in Warehouse, Logistics, Transportation and Supply Chain Management.** The applicant for the Chair Professor should be a distinguished academic or industry leader with a proven track record of excellence in warehouse, logistics, transportation and supply chain management research, teaching and industry engagement. The AMAZON Chair Professor is expected to be a thought leader, an accomplished researcher, an effective teacher and a skilled administrator.

For details about the qualification and experience requirements, responsibilities and other terms and conditions of engagement and to apply, please visit the GSV website **https://gsv.ac.in.** Last date to apply- 30 Days from publications of this advertisement.

State Information Commission brings Apex Bank under RTI Act

As the State Co-op Apex Bank has now been declared as public authority, the information relating to its functioning, including financial decisions, will now be subject to public scrutiny under RTI

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a significant order that goes a long way in ensuring transparency in the cooperative banking sector, the Karnataka Information Commission has ruled that the Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank qualifies as a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005, directing it to comply with provisions of this transparency law.

The ruling came while hearing a second appeal filed by Hanumantha Vasanth Shinde, who had sought copies of documents submitted by Nirani Sugars Ltd. while availing loans from the Apex Bank between March 2022 and June 2024. The bank had declined the request, stating that it was a cooperative society and hence did not come under the purview of the RTI Act.

The bank argued that it was neither owned nor substantially financed by the State government and therefore did not fall within the definition of "public authority" under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act.

However, State Information Commissioner Rajashekara S., who heard the case, rejected the argument, observing that the institution functions under deep and pervasive state control.

In his order, the Commissioner examined the historical evolution of the bank, statutory provisions governing cooperative institutions, and the extent of administrative and financial oversight exercised by the State.

The order pointed out that the bank traces its origins to the cooperative movement in the erstwhile Mysore State and was founded by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in his official capacity. Over the decades, the State government has continued to influence its functioning through policy directions and institutional oversight, it noted.

The commission observed that the Registrar of Cooperative Societies serves as an ex-officio director on the bank's board and retains statutory powers to inspect records, conduct inquiries, and order audits under the Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act, 1959.

Further, audit reports of apex cooperative institutions are required to be submitted to the State government and placed before the legislature. The bank is also regulated by the Reserve Bank of India and supervised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development for rural credit operations, the order pointed out.

The commission relied on several judicial precedents to determine whether the bank could be treated as an instrumentality of the State.

It cited the Supreme Court judgment in Ajay Hasia v/s International Airport Authority case, which laid down tests for identifying State-controlled bodies.

It referred to the Karnataka High Court ruling in B.T. Krishnegowda v/s Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank, which held that the Apex Bank is an instrumentality of the state and therefore subject to writ jurisdiction.

The commission directed the Apex Bank to appoint Public Information Officers (PIOs) and First Appellate Authorities (FAAs) across its offices and comply with the proactive disclosure requirements under Sections 4(1)(A) and 4(1)(B) of the RTI Act. It instructed the Principal Secretary of the Cooperation Department and the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to ensure that the bank implements the RTI framework without delay.

Wider implications

The order could have broader implications for cooperative financial institutions in Karnataka as many of which have resisted RTI requests citing their cooperative status.

With the Apex Bank now being declared a public authority, information relating to its functioning – including governance practices and financial decisions – may be subject to public scrutiny under the RTI Act. This is expected to have wider implications as this institution that wields significant political influence, especially at grassroots, is now being opened to public scrutiny.

Prajwal case: SIT names 39 accused who 'circulated obscene content'

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the circulation of explicit video clips and photographs related to multiple instances of sexual abuse allegedly committed by Prajwal Revanna, former MP, has filed a charge sheet in a Hassan court against 39 people. Many of the accused are reportedly associated with political parties.

Poornachandra Tejaswi M.G., who was an election agent for Prajwal Revanna during the Lok Sabha elections in 2024, lodged a complaint with Hassan CEN Police on April 23, 2024, alleging that some people were circulating "photos and videos carrying morphed images of the JD(S) candidate through pendrives and WhatsApp messages" in the constituency to prevent people from voting for him in the election. In his complaint, he named Naveen Gowda and others as accused. The police registered the case under the Information Technology Act, 2008, besides the Sections concerned under the Indian Penal Code.

Later, the case was handed over to the SIT constituted by the State government to probe the alleged sexual harassment committed by Revanna. Additional Superintendent of Police of Hassan M.K. Thammaiah, who was part of the SIT, investigated the case and filed the charge sheet, which comprises over 13,700 pages, including documents related to the case.

70 pendrives purchased

The team investigated the role of 52 people and finally found materials related to 39 people and named them in the charge sheet.

Prajwal Revanna

Naveen Kumar N.R., alias Naveen Gowda, a resident of Bengaluru and a native of Belur taluk; Karthik of Kaduvinakote, who was earlier Revanna's driver; Devaraje Gowda, an advocate who has identified with the BJP; and Harish Gowda, who earlier worked for Revanna, are among those named in the charge sheet.

The accused allegedly purchased 70 pendrives to circulate the obscene content, and the police reportedly found that Harish, one of the accused, purchased them by paying through UPI. The police collected the details of the purchase.

Poornachandra, the complainant, has expressed disappointment over the charge sheet. Speaking to the media in Hassan on Wednesday, he said that the charge sheet had dropped names of "influential people".

"The police should find out who the kingpin is. I had mentioned names of some influential people in my statement to the police. The police should dig deeper and find out the role of influential people in the case," he demanded.

A special court in Bengaluru convicted Revanna in August 2025 and sentenced him to imprisonment for the remainder of his life and imposed fines in one of the four sexual abuse and rape cases against him.

GBA chief sets pre-monsoon deadline for storm-water drain projects

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

M. Maheswar Rao, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), on Wednesday directed officials to complete ongoing storm-water drain development works across the city before the onset of the monsoon.

During an inspection of projects under the Bengaluru North City Corporation limits, Mr. Rao stressed the need to expedite works, particularly those connecting lakes, ahead of the pre-monsoon rains expected in May.

The projects are being funded through ₹175 crore from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) and ₹2,000 crore under the World Bank-assisted Karnataka Water Security and Resilience Programme (KWSRP).

M. Maheswar Rao

M. Maheshwar Rao has stressed the need to expedite works, particularly those connecting lakes, ahead of the pre-monsoon rains expected in May

Emphasising sustainable urban planning, Mr. Rao instructed officials to adopt nature-based solutions to prevent sewage from entering lakes. Citing the wetland model developed at Jakkur Lake, he directed officials to take up similar initiatives across other waterbodies to ensure that only treated water flows into them.

At Kogilu Lake, where a 1.1-km drain connecting Srinivasapura Lake is under development, Mr. Rao directed officials to strengthen the wetland system and install a sluice gate before the monsoon. He called for prioritising the rejuvenation of Srinivasapura Lake.

Urban spaces

Mr. Rao emphasised improving urban spaces alongside infrastructure. He instructed officials to design and develop the buffer zone along Dasarahalli Main Road into a pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically appealing public space.

Among other directions, he called for mapping and rejuvenating ponds across the city and addressing flooding at Nagavara Junction through integrated drain construction.

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, BNCC OFFICE, AMRUTHAHALLI MAIN ROAD, BYATARAYANAPURA, BENGALURU-560092.

No. BNCC/Comm/PR/361/2025-26 **Date: 18.03.2026**

FORM-1
NOTIFICATION (Under section 14B (4)(i))

In exercise of powers conferred under section 14-B of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act. 1961 the following Area mentioned in the schedule below is required by **The Commissioner, Bengaluru North city Corporation,** for **"Construction and formation of road from Kogilu –Kannuru main road to Bellahalli and Mitteganahalli Scientific land fill site in Yelahanka Zone road Width of 18 mtrs"** It is hereby informed to the land owners and interested persons whose lands are required for the public purpose, to appear and submit their claims along with the copies of the relevant documents viz. (i) Sale/partition/other deeds of title, (ii) Up-to-date RTC's (iii) Mutation Copy (iv) Tax paid receipts (v) conversion order of Non agriculture purpose (vi) Revenue sketch (vii) Akar Bhand etc., in person in the place and dates as indicated in the address below and state their respective interest in such land.

The place where land owners/interested persons have to appear and submit their claims	Name and address of the divisional / sub-divisional / branch offices	Date and time
Joint Commissioner, Zone-1, BNCC, Amruthahalli Main road, Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru-92.	Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Divison, 2nd floor, Divison Office, 9th main road, 'D' Block, Sahakara Nagara, Bengaluru -92. Phone: 9844508268	30 days from the date of Notification Time: 10 AM to 5 PM

The land owners / interested parties of the scheduled properties whose lands are to be acquired shall give an option for Grant of Development Rights to the **Commissioner, Bengaluru North city Corporation,**

The land owners shall receive twice the area of land surrendered in lieu of monetary compensation as Development Rights (Notional land) and two time the building area surrendered as estimated by the value of the building area surrendered divided by the market value of the land on which the building is constructed. The Notional land can be utilized by factorizing with the market value at the originating plot and receiving plot. The Notional land is eligible for FAR and used as additional built up area at the receiving plot as per the terms and conditions prescribed in the Benefit of Development Right Rules, 2016.

The public in hereby informed about the details of the land and land owners and interested persons whose lands are required for the public purpose and Development Rights Certificate (DRCs) are to be issued in lieu of monetary compensation. Any objections and suggestions are to be addressed to the Special Land Acquisition Officer (LAQ and TDR), BNCC within thirty days from the date of publication of this Notification.

SCHEDULE

Acquisition of land required for Construction and formation of road from Kogilu –Kannuru main road to Bellahalli and Mitteganahalli Scientificland fill site in Yelahanka Zone raod" (published under GOK Grants under Nagarothanna scheme of works vide No.UDD.199.SFC.2016 dt: 21.06.2016)"

Name of District : Bengaluru Urban | Name of the Taluk : Bengaluru North taluk | Name of the Village: Bellahalli

Sl No	Sy No/ Khatha No	Type of land		Nature of Land			Dimension of the land/plot and extent in sq.m		Boundaries of the Land/ plot				Building details			Present activity Land /Building (Specify Specific activity such as shop, office, factory, aparat -ment, individual house etc,	Market (guidelines) value of the land per sqm			Name and address of the owner of the plot/ land for which DRC is to be issued/ already issued.
		Vacant	Builit Up	Agriculture	Converted Undeveloped	Approved Layout/Developed land Builiding Site	Dimension	Extent	North	East	West	South	Extent in Sq.mt	Type of construction nad No.of floors	Floor area ratio		Agriculture/B-Khatha	Converted Undeveloped	A Katha, Developed site	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	59/1	Vacant							Sy No59/11	Remaing SY No 59/1	59/2, Remaing SY No 59/1	59/2 and Kogilu to Kannuru road	2332.70				3904.21	17250.00		Sandeep Rakra S/o Late K Lal
2	59/2								SY No 59/1	SY No 59/1	SY No 59/1	Kogilu to Kannuru road	892.70				3904.21	17250.00		Har Prith singh rana S/o Late Surindar sing Rana
3	57								Sy No.58	Remanig 57	59/1 road	59/1 road	4.16				3904.21	17250.00		D K Kalpna
4	59/11								SY No 66	SY No 58	SY No 59/11	SY No 59/1	1317.46				3904.21	17250.00		B R Amaranath S/o Late B.V Rameshawara
5	58								SY No 66	Remanig 58	SY No 59/11 and 59/1	SY No 57	2288.54				3904.21	17250.00		Shakil Shafi S/o Late S M Shafi
6	66								Remaing SY No. 66	Sy No 67	SY No 59/11	SY No 58	1406.65				3904.21	17250.00		R Gopala Krishna Murthy S/o Late Ramanna
7	67								Remaing SY No 67	Sy No 68	SY No 66 and Sy No 58	Remaing SY No 67	2290.00				3904.21	17250.00		Somashekar S/o Lte R. Gopalakishna murthy, R ashok S/o Late Rikab chand jain, Kamlesh kumar S/o Late Manik chand, Geethanjali W/o Gyan chand Usha Promad kumar Jain S/o Late Pramod kumar jain, Muskan Pramod jain
8	68								Mitaganahalli Boundray	Sy No 68	Remaing SY No 68	Sy No 67	6431.44				3904.21	17250.00		LAKE
9	8								Mitaganahalli Boundray	Sy No.09	Sy No.68	Remaing SY No 08	1362.02				3904.21	17250.00		Nazma Begum W/o Late Sayed Guljar ali
10	9								Mitaganahalli Boundray and Remannng Sy No.09 and sy No.10	Remaing SY No 09 and Sy No 13	Remaing SY No 09	Remaing SY No 09 and Sy No.10	5310.70				3904.21	17250.00		Nazma Begum W/o Late Sayed Guljar ali
11	13								Remaning Sy No.13	Sy No. 13	Sy No.09	Sy No.09	285.36				3904.21	17250.00		Government Property
12	10								Sy No. 13	Sy No.11	Sy No.09	Sy No.10	2133.12				3904.21	17250.00		Syed Farroq Pasha S/o Late Syed Maohamood
13	11								Remaning Sy No.11	Sy No. 13	Sy No.10	Remaning Sy No.11	2972.71				3904.21	17250.00		Nazma Begum W/O Late syed Gulzar ali, Syed Akbar ali S/o Syed Murthja Syed Hyder ali S/o Syed Murthja Syed Hasin ali S/o Syed Murthja Syed Hussain ali S/o Late Syed Murthuja
												Total Area in Sq.mt	**25844.86**							

Note: (1) The Market value of Land shall be subject to Land conversion and development status to be decided at Form-III stage based on production of documents from the land owners. **(2)** The Building extent shall be verified at the time of Form - III Public Notice stage based on the Building Valuation and Benefits of Development Rights Rules, 2016.

Sd/-
Commissioner, Bengaluru North city Corporation

State govt. announces six-point reform plan to overhaul KPSC

BJP demands SIT probe into alleged irregularities in the gazetted probationers' exam conducted by the Commission

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government announced a six-point reform plan in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, including an annual recruitment cycle with a fixed timeline and a five-year recruitment roadmap, to overhaul the alleged scam-hit Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC).

The Opposition BJP demanded a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into alleged irregularities in the gazetted probationers' examination conducted by the KPSC and called for re-examination of the main test to ensure transparency and curb corruption.

Members from both the Treasury and Opposition benches, however, agreed on constituting a House committee to recommend reforms aimed at ensuring transparency in KPSC recruitments.

Replying to a debate on allegations of corruption and nepotism in recruitment to gazetted probationary and other posts, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda expressed the government's dissatisfaction with the functioning of the KPSC, a statutory body, and outlined measures to reform its recruitment process.

Members from both the Treasury and Opposition benches agreed on constituting a House committee to recommend reforms aimed at ensuring transparency in KPSC recruitments. FILE PHOTO

IN THE LEGISLATURE

The proposed measures include conducting recruitment examinations annually for gazetted and other vacant posts; fixing a calendar of events for examinations, interviews, and announcement of results; adopting best practices of the Karnataka Examination Authority; preparing an advance five-year recruitment plan; constituting a House committee to suggest reforms; and reducing the number of KPSC members from 18 to eight. Mr. Byre Gowda said each department will determine its recruitment requirements in advance. By December 31 every year, departments must inform the KPSC of the number of posts to be filled in the next calendar year.

A fixed annual calendar – specifying the month, week, and date of examinations – on the lines of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will reduce uncertainty for job aspirants and minimise litigation, he said.

"If there is litigation in one year, the next year's recruitment will proceed as scheduled. At present, litigation in one cycle has a cascading effect," he noted. The government also plans to prepare a five-year recruitment strategy based on HRMS data

Group 'C' recruitment

For Group 'C' posts, a strict timeline will be prescribed. These recruitments will not involve interviews and will be based solely on examinations, roster, and merit. The KPSC will be directed to adhere to the prescribed timelines to avoid delays.

Mr. Byre Gowda said the government will urge the KPSC to adopt KEA's "best practices", noting that KEA conducts multiple recruitment exams without major malpractices or translation issues.

He clarified that while the KPSC is a constitutional autonomous body, the government remains accountable for lapses. "The Commission has not been following government directives," he said.

Opposition's concerns

Senior BJP member S. Suresh Kumar held the Controller of Examinations responsible for alleged malpractices and demanded a probe and re-examination of the main test.

Citing corruption and nepotism, he alleged that multiple candidates from the same examination hall clearing the mains had raised serious public doubts. "The KPSC has become a fountainhead of corruption. Those involved must be impeached to send a strong message," he said.

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok, along with V. Sunil Kumar and C.N. Ashwath Narayan (all BJP), reiterated the demand for an SIT probe and stringent action against those involved.

Mr. Byre Gowda said the government is open to a probe if the Opposition provides specific instances of malpractice. The House ultimately agreed to constitute a committee to recommend comprehensive reforms to the KPSC recruitment system.

Bill seeking to prevent 'honour killings', caste-based crimes tabled in Assembly

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government tabled the Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition (Eva Nammava, Eva Nammava) Bill, 2026, in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday. It aims to curb "honour killings" and violence arising from caste-based objections to inter-caste marriages.

The Bill notes that caste-based discrimination continues to persist in the State and often manifests in brutal forms of violence, including honour killings, particularly against young adults who exercise their constitutional right to choose their life partners through inter-caste marriages.

The proposed legislation seeks to ensure freedom of choice in marriage, prevent caste-based crimes, safeguard human rights, and promote dignity in inter-caste unions. It also proposes the creation of an Eva Nammava, Eva Nammava Vedike (meaning "he/she is ours") to solemnise and support inter-caste marriages.

The government decided to introduce the Bill in view of rising incidents of violence and killings linked to inter-caste marriages.

The government decided to introduce the Bill in view of rising incidents of violence and killings linked to inter-caste marriages. GETTY IMAGES

Stringent punishments

The Bill guarantees protection for consenting adults entering into marriage and provides safeguards against family or community coercion. It proposes a minimum punishment of five years' imprisonment in cases where a person or couple is killed in the name of "honour".

In cases of injury inflicted in the name of "honour", the punishment includes a minimum of two years' imprisonment along with a fine of ₹2 lakh.

Unlawful gatherings

The legislation prohibits the assembly of five or more persons with the intention of condemning or opposing a marriage on grounds of caste, tribe, community, tradition, or family objections.

Those found guilty of participating in unlawful assemblies or engaging in criminal intimidation will face up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of ₹2 lakh.

All State government officials will be required and empowered to assist law enforcement agencies in implementing the provisions of the law.

The government will identify districts, sub-divisions, and villages where such crimes have been reported over the past five years. Each district magistrate will constitute a monitoring committee to oversee implementation, review relief and rehabilitation measures, and track prosecution of cases.

Additionally, an Eva Nammava Vedike will be set up in every district, comprising a retired judge, police officer, revenue officer, sub-registrar, and other members as prescribed.

The government, in consultation with the High Court, will designate certain district courts as special fast-track courts to try cases related to crimes committed in the name of "honour".

Tax Bill

The Karnataka Tax on Profession, Trades, Callings and Employments (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was also tabled in the Assembly. It aims to simplify compliance, reduce paperwork, and improve ease of doing business.

The Bill proposes that filing of returns may be deemed complete in cases where an enrolled person has paid the due tax for the year.

The move is expected to streamline tax administration, improve voluntary compliance, and enable more efficient use of departmental resources.

₹260 crore sought to develop 50 slums: Zameer Ahmed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Housing Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan said he has urged the Chief Minister to sanction ₹260 crore to adopt and develop 50 slums as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Karnataka Slum Development Board.

Replying to Congress member K. Govindaraj in the Legislative Council on Wednesday, the Minister said the Chief Minister has assured that funds will be provided in the supplementary Budget.

Mr. Ahmed said he had also reached out to companies such as Wipro and Infosys to mobilise Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for slum development.

He said 3,325 slums have been identified across the State, of which 2,866 are officially notified. At present, only ₹50 crore is allocated for their development and provision of basic infrastructure, which he said is inadequate. "In view of this, a proposal has been submitted to enhance the allocation to at least ₹500 crore," he said.

'Action will be taken after legal opinion on waqf RTC entries sans documents'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has said that the government will act on properties recorded as waqf in Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTCs) solely on the basis of gazette notifications, without supporting documents, after obtaining the opinion of the Law Department and the Advocate-General.

Replying to BJP member P.H. Poojar in the Legislative Council on Wednesday, he said the issue will be examined in the light of court rulings, including a Supreme Court judgment in a Hyderabad-related case, and directions issued by the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Noting that such entries date back to gazette notifications issued in 1965 and subsequently reflect in land records, the Minister said a joint circular will be issued after legal consultation. Deputy Commissioners will be directed to review such cases.

Mr. Byre Gowda said several properties have been recorded as waqf in RTCs without supporting documents such as sale deeds, gift deeds, registration papers or grant orders. These include 21.21 acres of government land and 3,903.11 acres of private land in Bengaluru, 28.09 acres of government land in Vijayapura district, and 315.19 acres of government land and 73.01 acres of private land in Bagalkot district. Mr. Byre Gowda added that the RTC process has been brought online, enabling tracking and faster disposal of applications. Pending cases in tahsildar courts have been reduced from 10,774 to 137, and in Assistant Commissioner courts from 73,634 to 10,255. Of the 32,787 cases pending for over five years, only 2,894 remain.

To expedite disposal, eight special Deputy Commissioners have been appointed in Bengaluru and 27 special Assistant Commissioners across the State.

99.35% of Sakala services delivered within timeline: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has said that 99.35% of applications under the State's Sakala scheme have been processed within the stipulated time this year, reflecting improvement in service delivery, particularly for caste and income certificates.

Replying to a question from Congress member K. Abdul Jabbar in the Legislative Council on Wednesday, the Minister said reforms introduced over the past two-and-a-half years had streamlined services at Nada Kacheris and tahsildar offices.

"Services, including issuance of caste and income certificates, are now being delivered within the prescribed timeframe," he said.

Krishna Byre Gowda during the State Assembly session at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Mr. Byre Gowda said about 1.6 crore applications were submitted to Nada Kacheris last year, of which 98 lakh were disposed of within the Sakala timeline, amounting to 98.92% compliance. Only around 1.1% of applications were delayed. "In the current year, 99.35% of applications have been cleared within the deadline," he said.

Online applications

To reduce footfall at government offices, the Minister said online applications had been enabled for caste, income and residence certificates. Applicants can apply using mobile phones, receive SMS updates at every stage, and download certificates from home.

He said the government is developing a software system to enable automatic generation of caste and income certificates using data from the family database, including address and income details. "The system has been under development for about a year and is expected to further simplify the process," he said.

On the Bhu Suraksha initiative, Mr. Byre Gowda said digitisation of land records is under way, with around 74 crore pages of original records already scanned. Citizens will be able to obtain certified copies from home, eliminating the need to visit offices.

Auto-mutation

The Minister also highlighted progress in property record management, stating that nearly 98% of khata transfers are now completed automatically through the auto-mutation system.

Responding to Congress member Ramoji Gowda, he said the system was introduced to address delays in post-registration mutations. "Automation has increased from 66% in the first phase to 98% now," he noted.

Most transfers are completed within hours or up to 16 days as per legal provisions, with delays occurring only in cases where objections are raised. Officials can file objections only in matters involving government interest, while private disputes must be raised by the parties concerned, he clarified.

To prevent misuse, Aadhaar-based e-KYC has been made mandatory for filing objections, helping identify repetitive or frivolous complaints.

Commercial ads to be banned near heritage structures

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State Legislative Council on Wednesday passed two amendment Bills related to advertisements in urban areas and the transfer of police officers. Both the Bills were adopted by the Karnataka Assembly on Monday.

Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh, who tabled the Bill, announced a ban on commercial advertisements in and around heritage structures. Moving the amendments to the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976, and the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964, the Minister said the decision is intended to protect the aesthetic and cultural value of heritage buildings while also streamlining advertisement regulation.

Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh says thousands of unauthorised advertisements have come up across the State without payment of any fee or tax to local bodies. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Suresh said that over the past seven to eight years, thousands of unauthorised advertisements have come up across the State without payment of any fee or tax to local bodies, resulting in significant revenue losses running into hundreds of crores.

"The amendments are aimed at curbing such unauthorised advertisements and ensuring that urban local bodies receive due revenue," he said.

In cases where advertisements are displayed on private property, the property owner will not be taxed. Instead, the advertiser or company concerned will be held responsible for payment. Advertisements will be permitted only in designated locations identified by local bodies, ensuring that they do not inconvenience the public. However, no advertisements will be allowed on the walls of heritage structures or in their immediate surroundings in a manner that affects their appearance.

Exemptions have been provided for professionals such as doctors and lawyers. However, political parties and leaders who put up flex boards, banners and buntings will be required to pay fees based on size, as determined by local authorities.

The Minister said that advertisement charges will be fixed based on the location and category of urban areas, and the revenue generated will be utilised exclusively for the development of the respective local bodies.

Responding to members' queries, he said separate rates will be prescribed for LED advertisement boards.

Police Bill

The Karnataka Police Bill, 2026, moved by Home Minister G. Parameshwara, empowers the Police Establishment Board to immediately transfer police officers up to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police for misconduct, negligence, or dereliction of duty.

This amendment allows for action before the mandatory two-year tenure expires. The Act covers cases of "misconduct or gross negligence or dereliction of duty or an act of moral turpitude".

The Police Establishment Board is authorised to take action directly rather than waiting for lengthy government approval, aiming to reduce political interference and speed up disciplinary actions.

Government seeks BJP's support to ban DJ music during festivals

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Congress government has sought the support of the Opposition BJP to issue an order banning the use of DJ music during cultural and religious festivals across the State, citing concerns over noise pollution and excessive spending.

In a reply to S.N. Channabasappa, BJP MLA, Minister for Kannada and Culture and Backward Classes Shivaraj Tangadagi said the government will support the proposal and that he will act if the BJP extends its cooperation.

Labour Minister Santosh Lad said the growing reliance on DJ music during various *jayanthi* (birth anniversary) celebrations has become a serious concern.

IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge said DJ culture did not exist earlier.

"Today, processions of our gods do not move forward unless item songs are played by DJs. This trend has become distasteful," he said.

Mr. Lad added that loud DJ music serves no genuine cultural purpose and called for a complete ban, irrespective of which party is in power. Instead, he suggested promoting traditional cultural programmes. "Funds ranging from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh can be provided. At present, budgets run into crores, as some artistes charge exorbitant fees," he said.

IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge said, "DJ culture did not exist earlier. Attention must be paid to the nature of songs being played."

Mr. Channabasappa also dared the government to ban the Azaan, claiming that the Supreme Court had prohibited it. Mr. Kharge clarified that the apex court had only prescribed permissible decibel limits for all forms of sound, including Azaan and bhajans.

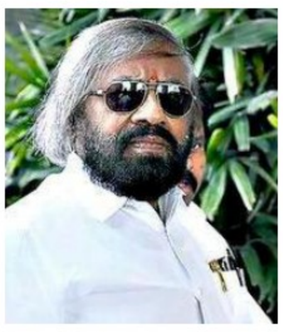
INBRIEF

A.P. CM launches free bus travel for differently abled

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday launched the 'Divyang Shakti' scheme, which offers free bus travel to differently abled persons. Accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan, HRD Minister Nara Lokesh and beneficiaries, Mr. Naidu travelled 11 km in a bus. Under the scheme, those with more than 40% disability can travel free of cost in APSRTC buses. Attendants will get a 50 per cent concession on the fare.

'Complete repair work of elephant trenches'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



Eshwar B. Khandre

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre on Wednesday instructed Forest Department officials to ensure proper maintenance of elephant trenches and hanging solar fences installed in Kodagu district to mitigate human-elephant conflict.

Mr. Khandre, who met with MLAs A.S. Ponnanna, Manthar Gowda, and Darshan Dhruvanarayan, instructed officials to complete the repair work of the existing 422 km of elephant trenches and 544 km of hanging solar fences within one month.

He said that 38% of deaths caused by human-wildlife conflict in the State occur in Kodagu district and directed officials to step up patrolling.

Mr. Khandre also instructed them to strengthen the elephant task force and rapid response teams.

He added that in order to enable staff to respond quickly when elephants and other wildlife enter coffee plantations and to drive them back into forests, four vehicles have already been purchased in addition to the existing six.

The Minister directed that four more vehicles be procured and that local youth be hired on a contract basis to strengthen the task force and improve efficiency.

Hailstorm lashes Shivamogga; rain in Mysuru, other districts

The hailstorm was so intense that many two-wheeler riders were forced to abandon their vehicles and seek shelter to escape the falling hailstones

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/MYSURU

Shivamogga city and several parts of the district experienced hailstorms accompanied by high-speed wind and thunderstorms on Wednesday afternoon.

The downpour began at around 4.30 p.m. and continued for about an hour. Within minutes, the sound of rain gave way to the rattle of ice pebbles striking metal rooftops and windshields. The hailstorm was so intense that many two-wheeler riders were forced to abandon their vehicles and seek shelter to escape the falling hailstones.

Power supply was also disrupted in many areas, and several trees were uprooted in the city.

The high-speed winds that accompanied the hailstorm left many roads covered with shredded leaves, snapped twigs, and broken branches.

Shivamogga city experienced heavy rainfall on Wednesday accompanied by hailstones. S.K. DINESH

Vehicles parked under trees were not only battered by hail but were also covered by a thick layer of green debris. As the winds eased and the rain subsided, residents stepped out of their homes with open palms, eager to feel the falling ice. For many, it was the first major hailstorm in years.

Meanwhile, Mysuru city witnessed moderate to heavy rainfall accompanied by gusty winds on Wednesday evening, bringing much-needed relief from the intense summer heat. The downpour, which began around 4 p.m., lasted for nearly an hour and marks the first significant rainfall of the season. In some areas, the rain was also accompanied by minor hailstones.

Several roads and low-lying areas were inundated with rainwater, causing brief disruptions to traffic.

Meanwhile, a parking shed on the premises of Prabuddha Academy on the outskirts of Kalaburagi collapsed late on Tuesday night following heavy rain and strong winds.

In Yadgir, a sudden downpour coupled with gusty winds and hailstones late on Tuesday night and in the early hours of Wednesday disrupted power supply at various places in the district as 45 electricity poles broke down.

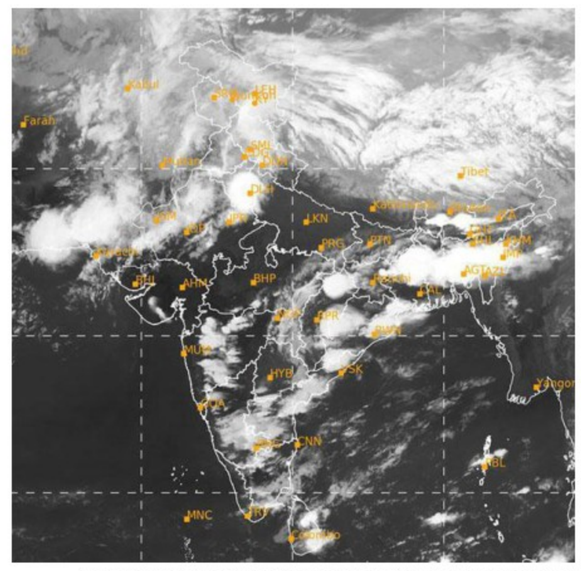
Woman dies in wall collapse

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

A 34-year-old woman died when a wall of a house collapsed on her in Hosur village of Belagavi district on Tuesday night. Parveen Bepari suffered a head injury and died on the spot. She and her husband Shareef Ahmed rushed to take shelter under an old house after it began raining heavily when the wall collapsed.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Delhi, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Jharkhand, Odisha, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	32.5	23.0	Kozhikode	13	33.6	22.2
Ahmedabad	—	36.3	23.2	Kurnool	—	35.5	21.6
Aizawl	—	31.0	14.5	Lucknow	—	34.9	18.6
Allahabad	—	37.6	18.8	Madurai	0.2	34.4	24.1
Bengaluru	—	32.3	20.5	Mangaluru	—	33.1	24.3
Bhopal	—	35.4	16.6	Mumbai	—	31.3	21.3
Bhubaneswar	—	34.7	23.0	Mysuru	30	33.8	16.2
Chandigarh	—	27.8	13.5	New Delhi	—	33.6	18.0
Chennai	—	34.2	25.2	Patna	—	33.9	23.0
Coimbatore	0.3	34.2	24.0	Port Blair	—	31.9	27.2
Dehradun	—	28.5	14.2	Puducherry	—	32.5	24.8
Gangtok	0.6	20.1	10.9	Pune	—	37.8	20.9
Goa	—	34.2	23.4	Raipur	—	35.5	23.5
Guwahati	—	30.4	19.5	Ranchi	—	34.2	18.5
Hubballi	—	32.0	21.0	Shillong	0.2	22.0	10.0
Hyderabad	4	28.4	18.5	Shimla	—	19.2	10.0
Imphal	—	26.5	14.9	Srinagar	0.2	8.4	6.7
Jaipur	—	33.7	21.4	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.8	25.3
Kochi	5	31.6	25.8	Tiruchi	—	35.7	25.4
Kohima	—	23.0	13.7	Vijayawada	—	32.9	23.4
Kolkata	—	33.5	24.5	Visakhapatnam	—	32.5	25.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.37	..86	.16	...110	...179	
Bengaluru	...4	..17	.36	...127	...145	
Chennai	...5	5	.40	29	68	
Delhi	.84	..52	117	...243	...198	
Hyderabad	...2	9	.75	48	66	
Kolkata	...8	..49	.31	39	47	
Lucknow	.14	..40	.45	...142	...162	
Mumbai	...9	..81	.28	44	...101	
Pune	..—	..46	.39	...122	...144	
Visakhapatnam	.26	..49	.11	26	70	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 285 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Pampore, Jammu & Kashmir recorded a healthy AQI score of 27

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Webinar on biotech careers in food and nutrition sector to be held on March 22

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Hindu and VIT Chennai will organise a webinar titled "Biotech Careers: Food and Nutrition" on March 22 at 11:30 a.m.

The webinar is held as part of their initiative, "Biotechnology: Role in Industry 5.0-Sustainable Future Pathways", which aims to focus on biotechnology's increasing influence in various sectors, including agriculture, food, healthcare, and research-driven innovation.

The webinar will have insights on the role of biotechnology in the food and nutrition sector, which includes advancements in food processing, sustainability, nutrition science and safety.

The webinar will feature G. Jayaraman, professor and dean, School of Bio Sciences and Technology, VIT Chennai; Chakkaravarthi Saravanan, associate professor, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, and VIT Alumni; R. Balaguru, technical director, V.K. Palappa Nadar Poultry Farms Private Limited and VIT Alumni; and Anand K. Jadi, general manager and plant head, ICML Medak, ITC Limited. It will be moderated by journalist Soma Basu.

Researchers, students and aspiring professionals will get a detailed understanding of career opportunities and emerging trends. To register, please visit https://newsth.live/THVITFNE or scan the QR code.

Indian wolf gives birth to 7 pups

MANGALURU: Seven pups of an Indian wolf born at Pilikula Biological Park in January have now been let in the display enclosure. This is the first time an Indian wolf under captivity gave birth to pups at the park.

Indian Overseas Bank
GAD, 5TH Floor, Central Office:
763 Anna Salai, Chennai-2
Ph : 044 - 2851 9630, www.iob.bank.in

Supply of 814 nos of Jewel Safe to various branches of IOB Pan India

Detailed advertisement is available in the Bank's website **www.iob.bank.in** under the Tender section.

Last Date: 07.04.2026

Deputy General Manager

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)
O & M Circle, "Shakthi Soudha", Bondel, Mangalore - 575015
Ph: 0824-2443549 CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

NO: SEE/MNG/EE(O)/AEE(C)/JE(C)/2025-26/16315-318 Date: 17.03.2026

Short Term Tender Nofication (Second call)

MESCOM Invites Civil Engineering Capital Work of Mangalore Circle in Mangalore Division through e-procurement portal from registered PWD Contractors having EPF, ESI, GST and Labour department registration. For details NIT and to participate in the Tenders through KPPP directly you can access the tendering website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from Date: **20.03.2026 at 14:30 hrs**. onwards further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-, Superintending Engineer (Ele.), O&M Cricle, Mangalore

DIPR/DK/KSMCA/1782/25-26 dt: 18.03.2026

For Power Related Complaints & Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
(www.kpwd.gov.in)

Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Bangalore Division,
2nd Floor, PWD Annexure Building, K.R. Circle, Bangalore - 01
Telephone No. 080-22133370, **Email ID:** eepwdbngdn@yahoo.com
E-Portal : https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home

Tender Notification No. 65/2025-26 Dtd: 17.03.2026

Item-rate tenders, for the work in PWD, No.2 North Sub Division under this office noted below, are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka in accordance with Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement rules 2000 and as per Standard Tender Documents for procurement of works from the contractors registered in K.P.W.D. as per KPPP. Tender Notification are Published for 01 work **(Rs. 495.00 Lakhs)** Details of the tender work can be obtained from the above Office during office hours on working days. EMD & Tender processing fees are mentioned in KPP portal.

1. Tenders must be submitted online through KPP portal on or before **4.00 PM on Dated: 27.03.2026.**

2. The opening of tenders through KPP portal on Dated: **30.03.2026 at 11.30 AM** or further date and time will be Intimate.

For more details contact this office.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PWD, Bangalore Division, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/6358/Zen/2025-26

Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society
(An Organisation of Govt. of Karnataka)
No. 8, MSB-1, 6th & 7th Floor, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru - 560 052

No:KREIS/EE-1/Tender-27/2025-26 **Date:18.03.2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through E-Procurement Only)

The tenders have been invited for Construction of (Sc) Dr B.R Ambedkar Residential School Complex at Megunda, Chikkamangalore District and Civil Repair works in the Jurisdiction of KREIS **(Tender Indent No. 605, 430/Call-2, 746/Call-2 and 788/Call-2)** through e-Portal vide website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on 18.03.2026. The last date for receipt of tender is 17.04.2026 and 02.04.2026 respectively. The details may be viewed at above website.

Note: Any changes in term tender notification will not be published in dailies. It will be published in e-procurement portal only.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer-1
KREIS, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/6345/CCL/2025-26

BENGALURU-MYSURU INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR AREA PLANNING AUTHORITY
No.5, Second Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560009
Ph: 080-22341230/35, E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No.BMICAPA/CLU-03/110/2025-26/2848 **Dated: 18.03.2026**

PUBLICATION
(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Sri Varun.M S/o Mahesh.L.S has applied to this Authority seeking Change of land use from **"Agriculture"** Zone to **"Commerical"** purpose pertaining to Sy.No:77/5B extent of 00Acre-21 Guntas of Shivapura Village, Kasaba Hobli, Maddur Taluk, Mandya District under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961. The foresaid land is reserved for **Agriculture Zone** in approved Master Plan. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following;

1) By developing the Commercial Projects in the above said land, the general public will get jobs.
2) During the development works of the layout there will be opportunity of employment for labourers.
3) Surrounding areas will be developed by developing the Commercial Project in the above said land.
4) By the development of Commercial area, the Governement will get the Taxes in various forms.

Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his/her objection to Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days from this notice. Any objections received after stipulated time will not be considered.

Sd/-
Member Secretary,
B.M.I.C.A.P.A., Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/6349/CCL/2025-26

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
ENGINEERING WING
Office of the Chief Engineer, Arogya Soudha, 3rd floor, Leprosy Hospital Premises, 1st Cross, Magadi Road, Bengaluru-560 023,
Telephone No.**080-29557023**, E-mail: **cekhsdrp@gmail.com**

No: HFWD/EW/CE/TA-2/AE-3/Tender/2025-26/4513 Date: 18.03.2026

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Chief Engineer, HFWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru invites tender from eligible Contractors registered in KPWD in two tender document system in KPPP for Construction of Ayushman Arogya Mandir at **(1) Agrahara, (2) Akkanahally Cross-B, (3) Chowlagala, (4) D-Hosalli, (5) Didaga-B, (6)Halabelagola, Channarayapattana Taluk at Hassan District. (7) Guddada Shankarnahalli, Arsikere Taluk at Hassan District. (8) Sulagodu, Alur Taluk at Hassan District (Call-10).** Approximate Amount put to tendert: **Rs. 429.10 Lakhs(Excluding GST).** Earnest Money Deposit: **Rs. 6.45 Lakhs.** Stipulated period for Completion: **5 Months (including monsoon).**

Calendar of Events: (1) Last date for receipt of tenders: **27.03.2026 up to 16.00 hrs. (2)** Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids): **30.03.2026 at 12.30 hrs.**

The tender details can be downloaded from the KPP Platform. Tenders shall be submitted electronically at **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically. Interested eligible contractors shall register on the KPP Platform to participate in this tender.

NOTE: (1) All the rights are reserved by the undersigned for postponement or cancellation of entire tender process, rejection of bids/individual bid etc., without assigning any reason. **(2)** Henceforth, any changes in the schedule/contents will not be published through newspapers and further changes will be updated only on KPP Portal.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, H&FWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru.

KARNATAKA CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED
KMF Complex, Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bengaluru-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 25536789 fax: 080-25536105 E-mail: kmfengg@gmail.com

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/ M-Dairy/ Homogenizer Spare/02289/2025-26 Date: 18.03.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
[Two cover System] [Through KPP Portal only]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bangalore invites tender from the eligible manufacturers/ authorised dealer through KPP Portal for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested manufacturers /Suppliers who have handled similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and also contact **Help desk E-mail; hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com and helpline no. 080-25501227/ 25501216.**

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty.	EMD (Rs.)	Period of Completion
1	Supply of 001.05174/40- Crank Shaft (Replace old code 00105174) for 20KLPH Capacity FBF make Homogenizer Mother Dairy, Yelahanka.	1 Job	50,000/-	3 months

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated: **20.03.2026 to 27.3.2026 up to 4.00 PM. 2.** Last date for Tender submission on date: **27.3.2026 up to 4.00 PM. 3.** Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: **30.03.2026 at 4:30 PM.**

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering-2]

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Lakes division, 3rd Floor, Mini Vidhanasoudha, N.E.S Road, Yalahanka, Bengaluru – 560064.

No:BNCC/EE(lakes)/Tend-02/2025-26 **Date: 18-03-2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(SINGLE COVER SYSTEM)

(Through **GOK** KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** only)
Tenders on Item Rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bengaluru North City Corporation or Equivalent registration with BBMP/CPWD/KPWD/Railways /MES or any State Government Organizations.

Sl No.	Name of the work
1.	Annual Maintenance of Kammagondanahalli Lake (Call-2) **Approx. value of work : ₹ 25.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 50,000/-**
2.	Annual Maintenance of Abbigere Lake (Call-2) **Approx. value of work : ₹ 25.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 50,000/-**

Calendar of Events : (1) Availability of Tender Documents **18-03-2026** after **5:00** pm. (2) Last date & time for Receipt of Tenders is **26-03-2026** upto **5:00** pm (3) Opening of Tender Bid **27-03-2026** at **5:30** pm

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Lakes Division) BNCC

BENGALURU-MYSURU INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR AREA PLANNING AUTHORITY
No.5, 2nd Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560009.
Phone: 080-22341230/35 E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No:BMICAPA/CLU-01/119/2025-26/2850 Date: 18.03.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

[UNDER SEC 69(3) OF The Karnataka Town & Country Planning ACT, 1961]

Dr|| Nishchalanandanaatha Swamiji, Peetadyaksharu, Vishwa Vakkaligara Maha Samsthana Mata has applied to Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Area Planning Authority seeking to assign land use from "Public and Semi Public" to "Commercial" use under Sec 69(3) of the KTCP Act, 1961, for land in Sy.No:278/1 extent of 00Acre-11Guntas part of 01Acre-27Guntas of Kengeri Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk.

As per the approved Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Area Planning Authority's Master plan 0Acre-11 Guntas the proposed land is earmarked for Public and Semi Public, The proposed land is surrounded by Commercial developments.

Therefore in order to assign land use from Public and Semi Public to Commercial use, Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his/her objection to Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days. Any objections received after stipulated time will not be considered.

Sd/- Member Secretary,
BMICAPA, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/JA/6352/2025-26

No end to suffering

India must enlist more support against Pakistan's bombing of Afghanistan

As the U.S.-Israel war against Iran rages, India's western frontiers have flared up, intensified by recent clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan forces on the Durand Line. On Tuesday, Pakistani airstrikes tragically killed at least 400 Afghans at a drug treatment and rehabilitation centre. Pakistan, which has accused the Taliban administration of harbouring the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and supporting its terror attacks on Pakistan, denied Afghanistan's accusations, claiming that its strikes had only targeted "military installations". Despite the denial, it is clear from visuals that the Omid Rehabilitation Facility in Kabul was destroyed. In an extremely strong statement, India condemned what it called Pakistan's "cowardly" targeting of a hospital, rejecting its denial as a cover-up for a "massacre", and called for an international inquiry. The Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict, which has been simmering for over a year, escalated in February when the Pakistan Air Force struck Taliban bases in Kabul, Kandahar, and Paktia in what it called Operation Ghazab Lil Haq (Righteous Fury). Tensions have also risen after TTP attacks killed 11 soldiers and a child in Bajaur and 32 people in an Islamabad mosque following a suicide bombing. Pakistan has also been angered by closer India-Afghanistan ties and New Delhi's hosting of Taliban ministers, accusing the Taliban of turning Afghanistan into an "Indian colony" – a turnaround from its support in 2021, for the Taliban's rise to power in Kabul. Apart from its continued tensions and hatred of India, and now Afghanistan, Pakistan possibly benefits from the global focus on the U.S.-Israel war with Iran. The U.S.'s actions here and its statement expressing support for Pakistan's "right to defend itself against Taliban attacks", has also imbued Pakistan's generals with a sense of impunity to strike targets in Afghanistan at will.

New Delhi could be permitted some sense of 'payback' as Islamabad's fight against cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan mirrors India's problems with Pakistan. The constraints on Pakistan's military in a two-front situation with India and Afghanistan, compounded by a transnational war on the third front, may also be the source of some relief for India. With no dialogue with Pakistan, and the limited dialogue with a Taliban regime it deals with but does not formally recognise, India's diplomatic role in the conflict is limited. However, it must enlist other SCO members that have been concerned over the outbreak of an "open war" between Pakistan and Afghanistan, to intervene. The region is already suffering from trade, energy and travel restrictions as a result of the West Asia war, to risk more volatility and loss of lives, particularly in Afghanistan, where the vulnerable, especially women, have suffered the most.

Fire and more fire

India must treat hospital fire safety as an issue of criminal accountability

Cuttack is not an anomaly. It is the latest entry in a ledger of preventable deaths in Indian hospital ICUs. In 2016, 22 people died in a fire at a private hospital ICU in Bhubaneswar, which did not have the mandatory fire safety clearance. Following this tragedy, fire safety audits were made compulsory for such facilities. Last year, the Odisha government allocated about ₹320 crore for fire safety improvement across hospitals in the State. But this did not prevent the fire at the government SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, apparently caused by a short circuit in the ICU of the trauma care unit. Some reports suggest the fire may have started in a ventilator, which was later found heavily charred. The accident, which occurred in the early hours of Monday, claimed 12 of the 23 ICU patients. Although the hospital had a firefighting unit, its personnel arrived after more than 30 minutes, reportedly because staff did not alert them early. Additionally, the fire hydrants could not be operated by staff. Nevertheless, water is not the right medium to fight electric fires, which are best extinguished using carbon dioxide, a method that requires trained personnel. Last October, six patients were killed in an ICU fire in Rajasthan. In 2024, newborns died in an ICU fire in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. Two similar accidents were reported in Maharashtra in 2021. An audit in Jhansi revealed hazards including exposed wiring, inadequate earthing and electrical circuits not matching power load requirements – the last being a leading cause of electrical fires in India.

ICUs have intrinsic safety risks, as their oxygen-rich environment can turn even a spark into an inferno. ICUs are also packed with electrical equipment, and the personnel are not always well trained in their safe handling. State-of-the-art medical equipment comes with advanced electronics and variable frequency drives that generate what are called "harmonic currents". These currents flow within circuits and typically have no safety devices such as circuit breakers. Harmonics create silent, persistent overheating and insulation degradation and are a severe fire hazard. Today's electrical practice lays down that every time a new ventilator is wheeled into an ICU, the wiring, protection and load capacity must be re-evaluated. Older facilities need an electrical upgrade before cutting edge equipment can be installed. As patients in ICUs are often sedated, intubated, and connected to machines, staff must be trained to ensure their safe evacuation. Until India treats hospital fire safety as a matter of criminal accountability rather than bureaucratic paperwork, the fires will keep burning and the bodies will keep mounting.

NCERT book ban, a chapter on judicial transparency

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The top court's ban on an NCERT textbook exposes gaps in judicial accountability and public trust

Max Boot, former Features Editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, authored the seminal study on the United States judiciary, 'Out of Order: Arrogance, Corruption, and Incompetence on the Bench' (1998). Robert H. Bork, former Solicitor General of the United States, wrote the foreword to it with a striking conclusion – "Our Courts are behaving badly and the public, to the degree it can be brought to understand that, will exert force for reform, a reform that must be structural as well as intellectual and moral."

He observed that the book's subtitle sums up a system in distress. The book underscores the critical role that the media and citizens must play while dealing with the judicial institution in a democracy.

In February this year, the Supreme Court of India, faulting what it felt as selective reference to corruption within the judiciary, directed "a complete blanket ban"on a Class eight social science textbook published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The three-judge Bench, presided over by the Chief Justice of India, further alluded to "an underlying agenda to undermine the institutional authority and demean the dignity of the judiciary".

The Court subsequently ordered that the persons responsible for preparing the passages should be 'disassociated' from future projects by governments and public universities. The Court thus instantly punished them, without due process or hearing. The prohibition by the Court is problematic as it sends critical signals about the shape of India's democracy today.

What appears to have annoyed the Bench were the passages in the book on judicial delay and corruption in judiciary. As per the news report cited by the Court, the textbook has data on the approximate number of pending cases in Indian courts. It refers to the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, which prescribe values for judicial life. It also discusses the in-house procedures evolved by the Supreme Court and the constitutional mechanism for the removal of errant judges.

An undermining of freedom

By itself, a book ban is the most egregious form of censorship. Such a move directly impacts the right to freedom of speech under Article 19, a solemn promise in the Constitution. This right could be restricted only by a law made by the state on grounds expressly provided under Article 19(2), such as "the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence". There is no law made by the state to justify the ban on the book in question. Judicial orders or judgments do not come under the realm of 'law' made by the state, as understood in the context of Article 19 *(Naresh Shridhar Mirajkar vs State of Maharashtra*, 1966).

For an act to amount to contempt of court, there must be material that scandalises the authority of the court or prejudices or interferes with judicial proceedings or the administration of justice, as defined under Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. Whether mere references to corruption in the judiciary and case backlogs meet this high threshold for criminal contempt was a question that, unfortunately, did not form part of the Court's deliberations. What was also not examined was whether the statements were too general in nature to suggest any malicious intent to scandalise the Court.

Further, and importantly, going by the scheme of judicial review, courts must put to constitutional scrutiny the law passed by Parliament often violating fundamental rights. When the courts take on the task of book banning, citizens are left without remedy, as constitutional courts are the last resort to safeguard fundamental rights.

Global efforts

In advanced democracies, the credibility of the court is a matter of concern, primarily for the court itself. Transparency International has conducted a number of surveys that show that there is a prevailing notion about judicial corruption. Judiciaries across the world have made efforts to address this problem. In Kenya, the reforms led by Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, between 2011 and 2013, are an illustrative example. During this period, institutions such as judicial ombudspersons, court users' committees, and performance management committees were established.

By 2013, public trust in Kenya in the judiciary had risen to 61%, compared to 27% in 2009. The reforms continued even thereafter. This happened only by acknowledging the issues and trying to address them, rather than suppressing critical voices.

In India, the courts including the top court have acknowledged the menace of delay and corruption. Judges have repeatedly warned about the 'bad apples' within the system. The very existence of the in-house Procedure indicates the possibility that a minuscule number of judges may breach their oath.

In *K. Veeraswami vs Union Of India And Others* (1991), the Court categorically held that judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court fall within the definition of "public servant" for the purposes of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, while also cautioning against the potential for misuse of this provision by the executive. The Court also said: "We consider that the society's demand for honesty in a judge is exacting and absolute. The standards of judicial behaviour, both on and off the Bench, are normally extremely high. For a Judge to deviate from such standards of honesty and impartiality is to betray the trust reposed on him. No excuse or no legal relativity can condone such betrayal. From the standpoint of justice, the size of the bribe or scope of corruption cannot be the scale for measuring a judge's dishonour. A single dishonest judge not only dishonours himself and disgraces his office but jeopardises the integrity of the entire judicial system."

The need for introspection

Therefore, the need to eradicate corruption and delay is also in the best interest of the judiciary. In the interim order directing the book ban, the Court also pointed out that the "book also chooses not to delve into any of the transformative initiatives and measures pioneered by this Court towards overhauling legal aid mechanisms and streamlining the ease of access to justice". Not addressing all counterarguments might render an opinion potentially incomplete. Yet, that is no reason for banning the view expressed. If the exercise of free speech is required to follow a particular form, the right itself becomes illusory. During judicial deliberations, nobody pointed out that the judiciary, like other organs of the state, must be open to dissent and reform.

The first step in fighting systemic problems such as corruption – whether in the executive or the judiciary – is acknowledging it. After all, it is imperative to curb all kinds of corruption and that civil society is educated about the institutional challenges. A court that continuously reforms itself is the bedrock of any democracy.

The opportunity in Cameroon to rebalance the WTO

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The World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference must ensure that trade is governed by rules rather than coercion

Today, trade is no longer just about economics. It is increasingly used as a geopolitical tool. Tariffs are imposed as pressure tactics, and economic dependence is sometimes used strategically. In this context, the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Ministerial Conference (MC14), to be held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, Africa (March 26-29, 2026), comes at an important moment. The real issue is not whether the WTO needs reform, but whether it can adapt fast enough to stay relevant in a world moving toward more transactional and power-based trade relations.

WTO in turmoil

The WTO is facing its biggest crisis since its founding in 1995. Its dispute settlement system is still effectively paralysed because the Appellate Body appointments have been stalled for years. This weakens trust in the system, since rules matter only when they can be enforced. At the same time, WTO negotiations have struggled to keep pace with major shifts in global trade. Digital commerce is growing rapidly and now forms a large part of cross-border economic activity. Yet, WTO rules have not evolved at the same pace.

Decision-making has also become slow and difficult. With 166 members at very different levels of development, consensus is hard to reach and cumbersome. As a result, many negotiations produce limited outcomes and long-pending issues remain unresolved.

Meanwhile, geopolitical tensions and the growing use of tariffs as political tools have distorted markets. However, these problems should not be mistaken for irrelevance. Most global trade still operates under WTO rules. If enforceable multilateral rules weaken, global trade would become unpredictable and unstable. Smaller and poorer countries would suffer the most, because they rely on common rules to protect themselves from pressure by stronger economies.

The WTO's challenges are also part of a wider shift in the global order. The Munich Security Report 2026 describes this as a move toward "wrecking-ball politics", where countries prefer disruption and short-term deals instead of gradual institutional reform. In trade, this is visible in the rise of unilateral tariffs, economic coercion and bilateral deals that bypass multilateral commitments. If this continues, rule-based trade could be replaced by ad hoc arrangements shaped mainly by power rather than shared principles.

Global production has changed

Against this backdrop, the MC14 offers a chance not just to fix technical problems but to also restore balance between predictability and fairness. The original balance of rights and obligations in the WTO no longer reflects today's reality. Emerging economies now export advanced and technology-intensive products, climate-related trade measures are expanding, and digital networks are reshaping how global production works.

Rules designed for a late 20th century trading system cannot fully govern a 21st century one.

Reform must start with restoring credibility to enforcement. Without a functioning dispute settlement system, commitments lose their value. Members need to rebuild a binding, trusted mechanism rather than relying mainly on temporary alternatives that lack universal acceptance. A robust dispute-resolution system helps remove politics from conflicts and keeps confidence in multilateral rules.

At the same time, predictability must go hand in hand with fairness. Long-standing disputes over agricultural subsidies, market distortions and unequal openness need transparent solutions. Many developing countries argue that while WTO rules ensure the rule of law, they do not always deliver the rule of justice. In other words, rules may be legally correct but still produce outcomes that feel unequal or developmentally unfair.

Reform should, therefore, improve transparency on subsidies, create credible responses to distortive practices, and revisit special and differential treatment so that it remains meaningful in today's economic conditions.

Institutional adaptability is also important. The WTO's structures were designed for a smaller and less complex membership, which contributes to today's deadlock. Some countries are moving ahead in smaller groups on issues such as e-commerce, investment facilitation, and services. These efforts can help progress, but they must remain transparent, inclusive and connected to the wider WTO framework. Flexibility should help the system move forward, not divide it. If such initiatives remain open to all members and eventually become part of common WTO rules, they can support reform instead of fragmentation.

Ultimately, WTO reform is not only technical but also normative. The Munich Security Report warns that a world shaped mainly by transactional deals would favour the powerful and leave weaker countries vulnerable.

The choice is clear

The WTO's value lies in preventing exactly this outcome by ensuring that trade is governed by rules rather than coercion. In an era of strategic competition, rules do not weaken sovereignty; they protect countries from economic domination.

The choice before the MC14 is crystal clear. Members can undertake serious reform, preserving the WTO's stabilising core while updating its rules, procedures and developmental balance, or allow the system to drift further into fragmentation. Achieving reform will require political will and shared responsibility.

Rebalancing the WTO is ultimately about securing a workable framework for cooperation in a world where economic interdependence is still unavoidable. If the MC14 seizes this opportunity, it can show that meaningful reform remains the most credible path to sustaining global trade governance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kabul bombing

Pakistan's action of bombing a hospital in Afghanistan is an inhuman act (Front page, March 18). Whatever may be the reasons, an attack on a hospital is indefensible. It is against the cannons of international law and even the rules of war to target and attack civilians in any conflict, especially sick patients under treatment. Pakistan, which has been training and harbouring terrorists on its soil and indulging in cross-border terrorism against India for long, appears to be at the receiving end on its western border. Comparatively, India has been very patient and tolerant towards Pakistan all these years. It is to be hoped that Pakistan would at least now realise the folly of creating, nurturing and harbouring terrorists and desist from such nefarious actions in future.

Kosaraju Chandramouli,
Hyderabad

Resignation over Iran war

The resignation of Joe Kent, the U.S.'s top counterterrorism official, in protest against the justification for American strikes on Iran, delivers a hard slap on the face to President Donald Trump and is an unexpected setback to his expansionist agenda.

Mr. Kent's statement that Iran posed no immediate threat to the United States and that the U.S. started the war due to the pressure exerted by Israel and its powerful lobby in America, is a bold, categorical and candid articulation of the factual and bitter reality that is prevalent at the ground level. It is an undisputed reality that relentless war mongering and military interventions culminating in military attacks have seen an unprecedented escalation in different parts of the world ever since Donald Trump returned to the White House. With the NATO allies giving the U.S. the cold shoulder, Mr. Trump stands exposed and isolated. Israel has been a co-offender too, in inflicting unwanted wars.

B. Suresh Kumar,
Coimbatore

AI and finance industry

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the finance industry, offering both significant opportunities and notable challenges. AI enhances operational efficiency by improving decision-making, credit scoring, and portfolio management, while also strengthening risk management through faster, more accurate fraud detection. Customer experiences are increasingly personalised with chatbots and AI-driven insights. However, automation may displace repetitive jobs even as it creates new high-skilled roles, and ethical concerns along with cyber risks require robust governance. Financial institutions must balance innovation with responsibility, invest in workforce reskilling, and prioritise transparency to ensure sustainable growth and equitable opportunities.

Senthilkumar Govindarajalu,
New Jersey, U.S.

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

India's future demographic challenges

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A new report by the International Institute of Migration and Development and the Population Foundation of India titled 'Unravelling India's Demographic Future: Population Projections for States and Union Territories, 2021-2051', underscores the demographic risks that are beginning to surface nationwide. India's population is projected to increase from 1,355.8 million in 2021 to 1,590.1 million in 2051, with an average annual increase of 0.5%, suggesting a prolonged period of slower population expansion. These figures fall below earlier estimates, strengthening the case that India is unlikely to face the threat of population explosion that once dominated political and academic debates. These projections point to a turning point, where India is poised to move beyond a youth-led, fast-expanding population into an era of a more urban, steadily ageing, and balanced demographic structure.

A problem for schools

The projections point out that the pre-primary school-going population (0-4 years) is expected to dwindle from 113.5 million in 2021 to 8.6 million by the middle of this century. Since most regions in the country are now close to universal primary school enrolments, the demand for new schooling facilities could ease out, especially in the government sector. A sustained drop in fertility could leave the country with an escalating number of 'uneconomic schools' (schools with lesser enrolment rates that cannot justify their economic costs), raising the threat of teachers losing their jobs, a trend that the State of Kerala has seen play out for more than three decades.

Evidence from different parts of the country suggests that declining fertility rates have already started influencing schooling requirements, with classrooms adjusting to smaller cohorts. Data from the Unified District Information System for Education and the Ministry of Education highlights a significant reduction in the number of government schools over the last decade, with schools dropping from 11.07 lakh in 2014-15 to 10.18 lakh in 2023-24, amounting to a reduction of close to 90,000 schools across the country. This decline has been accompanied by a sharp increase in private schools; their numbers grew from 2.88 lakh to 3.31 lakh over the same period, an increase of 43,000 schools.

While falling birth rates have led to a reduction in enrolments and closure of government schools, smaller families and improved capacity to afford education have propelled the demand for private schools. Many parents choose private schools in the hope of giving their wards the education they never had in life, nudged by social pressure and a common perception that government schools generally fall short on quality compared to private schools.

Greying population

As the demographic dividend largely depends on the working age population (15-59), a relatively higher proportion of this specific group can lead to faster economic growth, a dynamic evident in the development phases of several countries, including China, Japan, and South Korea. India has one of the world's largest workforces, rising from 833.8 million (65.2%) in 2021 to a projected peak level of 1,009.0 million (65.5%) in 2041, before declining to 998.1 million (62.8%) by 2051. There is an impending concern that the demographic dividend window will close after 2041, highlighting the urgency of leveraging it before its contribution to economic growth starts to diminish. Nevertheless, close to six out of every 10 persons in the country are expected to be part of the workforce by 2051, which is an encouraging sign.

However, India's population is ageing. In 2021, India's elderly population (60+) stood at 130.5 million or 9.62% of the population. By 2051, this number is projected to touch 325.3 million (20.5%), highlighting that there will be a profound increment in the ageing population. The median age, a measure that splits the population evenly by age, is projected to climb from 28 years in 2021 to 40 by 2051, signalling India's shift towards a more advanced stage of demographic transition. The growing elderly population is set to exert increasing pressure on healthcare and social security, thereby putting a strain on the state's finances.

Policy signals

The declining child population is expected to offer a better teacher-pupil ratio and expand infrastructural facilities in schools. Further, declining birth rates reduce demand for maternity care, allowing the healthcare system to rationalise the use of resources and offer better quality care. Though fertility levels have been falling, continued investments are required for family planning and to prevent unintended pregnancies, as well as reduce infertility and ensure the reproductive rights of women.

India needs to overhaul its education and skill development system to cope with modern-day challenges. It should also equip the younger generation to seize new opportunities before our demographic leverage disappears in the coming decades. The decline in the working-age population can be offset by bringing in more women to formal work (gender dividend) and by expanding access to better-quality employment. With the rapid growth of the elderly population, India's financial and healthcare systems, especially geriatric care, must be redesigned to support the growing needs of elderly citizens. At the same time, this creates a strong potential for a thriving silver economy, and could help in unlocking a second demographic dividend in the future.

The growing elderly population is set to exert increasing pressure on healthcare and social security, thereby putting a strain on the state's finances

A plausible three-cornered fight

The third player in Tamil Nadu electoral politics has always been a disruptor

STATE OF PLAY

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For the past one week or so, the political arena in Tamil Nadu has been dominated by reports of frenzied attempts to bring the fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), headed by popular film star Vijay, under the fold of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Talks of the TVK negotiating its entry into the NDA was laid to rest by party functionaries earlier this week. Leaders of the AIADMK and its ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which was said to be keen on roping in the TVK, also denied that talks were held in this regard. Political circles were abuzz with the speculation that the BJP was trying to bring the TVK into the NDA fold, as soon as the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Congress signed an electoral pact on March 4, after days of uncertainty and hard bargaining.

When the talks between the Dravidian major and the national party were on, there was a lot of noise about the possibility of the Congress ditching its long-standing ally in favour of the TVK. Once this issue became irrelevant, media attention turned to the theory of TVK joining hands with the AIADMK and the BJP. In October 2024, Mr. Vijay said that he was open to not only an alliance, but also to the idea of sharing power.

Luring in the TVK

What fuelled speculation was the perception that given the arithmetic strength of the DMK-led Secular Progressive

Alliance (SPA), the NDA would not be able to defeat the SPA. This was based on the fact that in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the SPA secured 47% of votes polled while the AIADMK and its ally, the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) netted 23% and the BJP-led NDA, 18.24% (now, the DMDK is a constituent of the SPA). As per an estimate, even after giving allowance for the political developments for and against the SPA in the last two years, the NDA still requires a minimum of five percentage points to put up a tough fight. Only the TVK can bridge this gap in vote share.

Of course, another reason cited for the alliance is that all the three major parties – the AIADMK, the BJP and the TVK – have the same goal of defeating the DMK. After all, at one stage, the first two had openly courted the TVK. About 10 days after the tragic stampede at the TVK leader's rally in Karur in September 2025, which claimed 41 lives, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, during his visit to Namakkal, remarked that "a beginning" had been made for the alliance. He made this observation in reference to a few people holding up the TVK flag at the meeting.

Even as Mr. Vijay began holding interviews, on March 10, with aspirants for the Assembly election at the party headquarters in Panaiyur on the outskirts of Chennai, media circles were abuzz about alliance talks. Mr. Vijay's scheduled visit to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) office in New Delhi on March 15 was linked to the much-speculated deal. Even though the party's high-level administrative committee chief coordinator K.A. Sengottaiyan on March 12 clarified that his organisation would go to the polls alone, political circles were agog with speculation that a majority of the TVK district secretaries supported joining the NDA. This was reportedly conveyed during a virtual interaction with the party general secretary 'Bussy' N. Anand. As of today, TVK's office-bearers have not denied that any such interaction took place, even though they rebut reports of holding negotiations for the alliance.

'Fancy offers'

Addressing a public meeting on March 17, TVK general secretary Aadhav Arjuna, regarded as one of the key functionaries of the party, claimed that "fancy offers" – 90 assembly seats and the post of Chief Minister for one half of the Assembly term of five years – had been made to his party but Mr. Vijay was "very firm" in rejecting them, and that the party would stand by religious minorities. But, he did not state who made the offer. On Wednesday evening, the TVK chief reiterated at an iftar event that his party would not compromise on secularism and social justice

Even though there is still time for more alliance drama, a three-cornered fight looks imminent. As in the past, the third force is bound to be a disruptor. It is to be seen which formation – the SPA or the NDA – benefits from the solo performance of Mr. Vijay and his colleagues.

Children have borne the brunt of Israel-U.S. aggression

Israel accounted for about 41% of all external attacks that ended with a child fatality, while the U.S. accounted for 21% of such attacks

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy
Nivedha M.

On the morning of February 28, as hundreds of young girls were attending their classes in Minab's Shajareh Tayyebeh school, the building was struck by a missile.

Residents and rescuers, who rushed to help seeing black smoke rising from the school, found blood stained backpacks, severed arms, and dead children buried under piles of rubble.

The school was likely struck by one of the U.S.'s Tomahawk cruise missiles, claimed to be one of the most precise guided weapons in the world. The school was one of the casualties in the targeted attacks by the U.S. on Iran, in conjunction with Israel.

Later reports confirmed that around 168 children, mostly aged between seven and 12, were killed in the attack. The school was located adjacent to a naval compound operated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Though U.S. President Donald Trump initially suggested that Iran itself – despite not having Tomahawk missiles – may have been responsible for these attacks, media reports and the U.S.'s preliminary military investigations suggest the attack was a result of the U.S.'s use of outdated targeting data.

The Pentagon elevated its probe into the matter last week. A UN inquiry is also underway to investigate the fatal strike. Amnesty International, this week, said that the strike points to a failure by the U.S. forces to take feasible precautions to avoid civilian harm.

A war on children

However, the girls in Minab weren't the only ones who paid the price of the ongoing war. More children are estimated to have been killed in the daily strikes launched by the U.S. and Israel on Iran in separate instances.

Less than two thousand kilometres away, in Lebanon, more than a hundred children have been killed by Israel's campaign since March 2. Reports indicate that Israeli airstrikes have completely wiped out generations of families in the country in less than two weeks. The death toll due to the ongoing conflict in Lebanon is reported to be rising faster than any other war that the country had previously endured.

What happened in Minab and what is unfolding in Lebanon aren't isolated instances. Data points to a more troubling pattern – the U.S. and Israel together accounted for about 62% of "external attacks" that ended with a child casualty since 1996. External attacks refer to acts of aggression or military involvement by an actor on foreign soil.

The Hindu analysed events of external attacks that were recorded by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. While over 66,000 events of external attacks have been lethal (ending with any fatalities), around 4% of such reported attacks have ended up with at least one child fatality.

Incidences of attacks were used as a proxy, as data for child fatalities under external attacks were not separately maintained. These events offer a reliable snapshot of the extent of attacks against children during conflict. However, fatalities in individual events may be significantly higher. The data only pertains to confirmed events of deaths, and therefore cases of missing children or unreported events of deaths are not included in the analysis.

A further look at the 4% reveals that close to 2,500 reported cases of external attacks have ended with a child fatality between 1996 and 2026.

A country-wise analysis of these events show that Israel accounted for about 41% of all external attacks that ended with a child fatality **(Chart 1)**. That is, about one in every nine lethal attacks (11%) launched by Israel since 1996 has killed at least one child.

No other country has recorded such events as high as Israel. The figures reflect the violent escalations in Gaza and West Bank since October 7, 2023 including instances when children were killed while receiving aid; via airstrikes; and in refugee camps. Close to 20,000 children have been killed in Gaza between October 7, 2023 and August, 2025. Infants alone accounted for 10% of these figures. This is despite the fact that Israel, globally, only accounted for 14% of lethal external attacks. **(Chart 2)**

Meanwhile, Russia alone accounted for 55% of lethal external attacks since 1996. Less than 2% of them have been reported to kill a child.

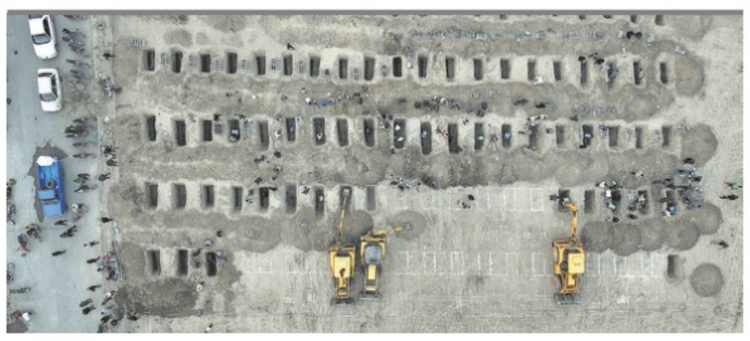
As for the U.S. which ranked second, in terms of external attacks carried out by countries that resulted in a child fatality, data shows that roughly around 7% of its lethal external attacks had resulted in a child casualty.

Grave violation

The United Nations Security Council identifies killing and maiming of children as one of the six grave violations against children in times of war. Children in these conflict zones might also be exposed to other atrocities such as recruitment by armed groups, sexual violence, abduction and denial of humanitarian access.

Days after the Minab school strike, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child said in a statement that the strikes on civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, serve as a stark reminder that children are among the most vulnerable in armed conflicts. It added that children must never be treated as collateral damage. However, with intensifying attacks and more buildings falling to rubble, children are at an increasing risk of becoming exactly that.

Nivedha M. is interning with the Hindu Data Team



A heavy toll: Graves are being prepared for the victims following a strike on a school in Minab, Iran, on March 2. REUTERS

Caught in the crossfire

The data for the charts were sourced from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. Data for 2026 pertains only till March 6

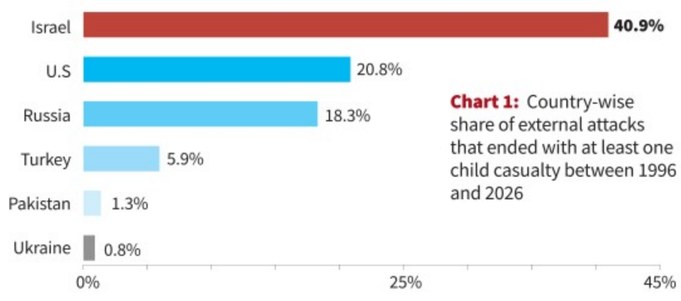
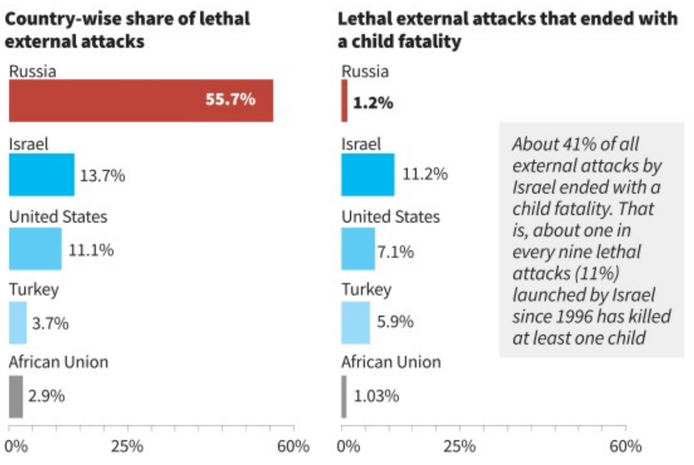


Chart 1: Country-wise share of external attacks that ended with at least one child casualty between 1996 and 2026

Chart 2: Lethal external attacks refer to external attacks that resulted in any fatality. Figures include reported lethal external attacks between 1996 and 2026


Country-wise share of lethal external attacks
Russia 55.7%
Israel 13.7%
United States 11.1%
Turkey 3.7%
African Union 2.9%
0%
25%
60%
Lethal external attacks that ended with a child fatality
Russia 1.2%
Israel 11.2%
United States 7.1%
Turkey 5.9%
African Union 1.03%
0%
25%
60%
About 41% of all external attacks by Israel ended with a child fatality. That is, about one in every nine lethal attacks (11%) launched by Israel since 1996 has killed at least one child

Note: Figures in the charts above may not add up to 100 as they only include the top countries in terms of share

■ Attacks attributed to the African Union refer to the African Union Mission in Somalia and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia

■ Attacks attributed to the U.S. include those under the 'Global Coalition Against Daesh,' as it was a U.S.-led coalition

The data only pertains to confirmed events of deaths, therefore cases of missing children or unreported events of deaths are not included in the analysis

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 19, 1976

French author's reply to critics

Madras, March 18: Mr. Dominique Lapierre, co-author of "Freedom at Midnight", claimed to-day that the controversial book was objective history and "a hymn of love for India" and did not distort the facts in any way.

"Four years of hard work and research have gone into the book and to dismiss it as fiction is most unjust", he said at a press conference.

Turning to the controversial part which maintains that Nehru and Patel, unable to handle the partition riots, secretly requested Mountbatten to take charge of the situation, Mr. Lapierre said this account though never published before was accurate. A memorandum at the U.K. Government archives, which had been dictated contemporaneously by Mountbatten, recorded the conversation among the three. This version was also corroborated by the private papers of Mr. V.P. Menon.

He said that far from denigrating Nehru, the book only brought out his greatness and political courage in having an Englishman as head of State after independence. "One cannot conceive of Ben Bella, for instance, asking De Gaulle to become head of State in independent Algeria though it might have solved many of their difficulties", he remarked.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 19, 1926

"Doodle" annual

We extend our congratulations to our humorous contemporary 'Doodle' on entering its sixth year of publication, which it does with its current number. For these five years this weekly journal has been providing mirth and relaxation for the public through its amusing cartoons, humorous stories, pungent – but never offensive – skits and burlesques mainly dealing with Indian social life, farces, sharp pieces of witticism etc. The first number of its sixth volume which is now before us is decidedly an improvement on its predecessors in more than one direction. It is slightly bulkier than hitherto and its cartoons on local politics are as delightful as they are to the point. Its "curry and chutney" are indeed well-dressed and the "pickings" too are a choice selection. We have no doubt this pioneer venture in a branch of journalism which is yet to come into its own in India will receive the support and encouragement it deserves.

From Page One

22 India-bound ships on Hormuz evacuation list

Crude carrier *Jag Laadki* that was escorted by the Indian Navy reached Mundra Port earlier on Friday. It was carrying approximately 81,000 metric tonnes of Murban crude oil from the United Arab Emirates. The vessel narrowly escaped damage when the Fujairah terminal where it was loading was attacked.

Some 23,000 Indian seafarers are stranded in the Persian Gulf, of whom 658 are on Indian-flagged vessels. Some 472 seafarers have been evacuated by various shipping companies from the Gulf region so far, as per the government.

In total, 22 Indian vessels are in the Persian Gulf region, west of the Strait of Hormuz; two in the Gulf of Oman, east of the strait; one in the Gulf of Aden; and two in the Red Sea. Of these, the government-owned Shipping Corporation of India owns six, of which five are in the Persian Gulf and one in the Gulf of Aden.

No Indian ship has been attacked so far in the conflict in West Asia. But three Indian seafarers have died, four have been injured, and one reported missing in foreign-flagged vessels.

Government sources said that seven West Asia-bound vessels were waiting at major ports and five in other ports in India.

(With inputs from Saptaparno Ghosh)

Iran vows to retaliate after gas field attack

"Five complexes, two refineries, two petrochemical complexes, and a gas field in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have become now legitimate targets for Iranian retaliation," the IRGC said in a statement.

The facilities named in the warning are the Samref Refinery and Jubail Petrochemical Complex in Saudi Arabia, the Al-Hosn Gas Field in the UAE, and the Al-Mesaieed Holding and Petrochemical Complex, as well as Phases 1 and 2 of the Ras Laffan Refinery in Qatar.

Earlier in the day, Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said an overnight strike on Tehran had killed Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmaeil Khatib.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed that Khatib had been killed. "The cowardly assassination of my dear colleagues Esmaeil Khatib, Ali Larijani, and Aziz Nasirzadeh, alongside some of their family members and accompanying team, has left us in deep mourning," he wrote in a social media post.

(With inputs from AFP)

Nine of family die as fire engulfs building in Delhi

The police said around 20 fire tenders and 11 ambulances were pressed into service alongside staff from Air Force police and National Disaster Relief Force. Forensic teams were called for inspection. It took almost three hours to douse the fire while cooling operations were under way until 2 p.m.

"Initially, the flames were seen in the ground floor with smoke rising up to the upper floors. The fire spread rapidly to the upper floors due to the presence of combustible items in the shops. The rescue was difficult as there was a single staircase going from ground to the upper floors," said S. K. Dua, Deputy Chief Fire Officer. "The trapped members could not find any other exit from the building," the officer added.

The police registered an FIR against unknown persons under Sections 287 (negligent conduct with respect to fire), 125 (a) (rash or negligent act endangering human life) and 106 (1) (death by negligent acts) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

8 dead as EV explosion sparks fire in Indore

Mr. Prateek said that four people were rescued from the building with minor injuries, while the charred bodies of eight victims were recovered from the site. Videos from the spot showed flames engulfing the house even as firefighters struggled to bring the blaze under control.

The DCP said that the fire began following a short-circuit in the car and quickly spread to electric wiring and a sports bike parked inside the house.

"The fire intensified after two of several LPG cylinders kept in the house exploded. The rescue teams had a tough time getting in as all doors fitted with electronic locks got jammed due to a malfunction. The teams had to break them down," Mr. Prateek said, adding that the 2.5-hour operation involved personnel from the police, fire department and the State Disaster Emergency Response Force. He said postmortem examinations have been conducted on all the deceased and inquest proceedings initiated, adding the fire did not cause any significant damage to neighbouring buildings. The State has ordered a probe into the incident.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said officials and experts have also been dispatched from Bhopal. He observed that the incident stemming from the use of digital locks and electric car charging systems highlighted a new type of challenge emerging as a result of evolving technology and its application.

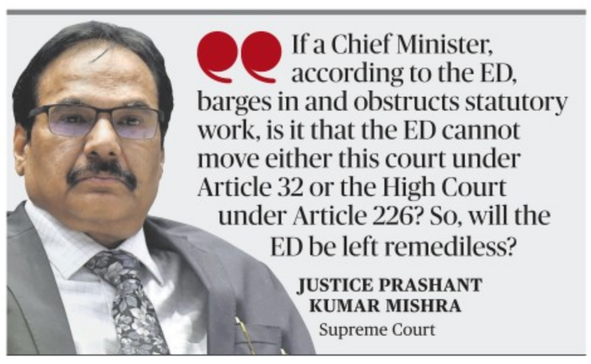
SC asks Bengal if ED should 'merely watch' as CM disrupts I-PAC search

The State government argues that the ED is not a 'person' under Article 32 and said that allowing its plea would undermine federalism; the top court questioned the situation saying the law cannot allow a vacuum to exist without any remedy

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court asked the West Bengal government on Wednesday if the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) was expected to merely "look and watch" when Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "barged" in and obstructed ongoing search at the offices of the political consultancy firm I-PAC at Kolkata in January.

The remark from Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra, heading a Bench, was in response to the poll-bound State's submissions that the ED was neither a "body corporate" nor a "legal or natural person" to approach the apex court under Article 32 of the Constitution claiming violation of its "fundamental rights". West Bengal, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan, raised preliminary objections to the maintainability of the ED's writ petition filed under Article 32, seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe against Ms. Banerjee and the senior police officers who accompanied her.



> If a Chief Minister, according to the ED, barges in and obstructs statutory work, is it that the ED cannot move either this court under Article 32 or the High Court under Article 226? So, will the ED be left remediless?
>
> **JUSTICE PRASHANT KUMAR MISHRA**
> Supreme Court

"If a Chief Minister, according to the ED, barges in and obstructs statutory work, is it that the ED cannot move either this court under Article 32 or the High Court under Article 226. So, will the ED be left remediless? This (Ms. Banerjee's alleged actions) is an unusual situation, an unhappy situation. This has not happened before," Justice Mishra addressed the State government.

The Bench asked what would be the situation if other Chief Ministers, taking a cue from Ms. Banerjee, started emulating her. "The law has to evolve according to new situations. There cannot be a vacuum. It cannot be that there is no remedy in law to a situation," Justice Mishra observed.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the ED, interjected to point out that the "Chief Minister, who is the head of the government in the State, hindered a lawful ongoing investigation being conducted in the larger public interest". The ED has maintained that the raids were part of an investigation into a ₹2,742-crore coal smuggling case.

"There is no question of the civil liberty or rights of the ED which is being trampled upon here. If the ED had a complaint, the Union government can invoke the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Constitution and approach the Supreme Court directly," Mr. Divan said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Ms. Banerjee, said an officer of the ED did not have a "fundamental right" to investigate. The power is drawn from the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

'ED as a front'

Mr. Sibal argued that the Centre cannot sue using Article 32 by using the ED as a front. Article 32 was only available to individuals wishing to approach the top court against encroachments by the state and its agencies on her civil rights.

If Central agencies, government departments and one or other instrumentalities of the state were allowed to approach the court under Article 32, they would start filing petitions against each other and private citizens.

"The principle of federalism, a basic feature of the Constitution, would be in tatters. States are not mere appendages to the Centre. Courts must be on guard against the conscious whittling down of power of the States by the Centre," Mr. Divan submitted.

"If Parliament wants to confer an agency the power to sue, it would confer the power specifically. Investigation agencies are not 'body corporates' with a power to sue," Mr. Divan said, requesting the apex court to refer the case to a Constitution Bench.

The court scheduled the next hearing on March 24.

Speaker irked by Minister's absence in Question Hour

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Wednesday expressed displeasure over the absence of a senior Minister during the Question Hour when questions about his Ministry were being asked.

Though the Speaker did not name anyone, the question was regarding the Postal Department which comes under Communication Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

"Where has the Minister gone," Mr. Birla asked when the question was being fielded by Minister of State for Communication Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani.

When the Minister of State replied that the senior Minister had gone for an "important meeting", Mr. Birla said, "The Question Hour is important, not meeting."

Earlier, the Lok Sabha Speaker had urged members not to speak among themselves when the House takes up obituary references.

'2 or 3 drones sighted along India's border every day'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

In the past five years, two or three drones were sighted every day and at least one drone incursion was reported each day along India's international borders, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has informed a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Ministry reported 4,323 drone sightings in the last five years, with 967 incursions intercepted or neutralised.

"The Committee recommends that counter-drone capabilities, including detection, neutralisation and forensic analysis, be further strengthened through induction of advanced technologies and enhanced inter-agency coordination mechanisms," said the 257th Demands for Grants (2026-27) report.

No full stop in politics, says Modi as Rajya Sabha bids farewell to 59 retiring MPs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that "in politics, there is no such thing as a full stop", as Rajya Sabha bid farewell to 59 Members retiring between April and July, including Deputy Chairman Harivansh, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, and Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge.

Lauding their contributions, Mr. Modi urged the Members to remain active in public life. He singled out Mr. Gowda, Mr. Kharge, NCP leader Sharad Pawar and Mr. Harivansh for their commitment to parliamentary work, calling their long tenures "a matter of immense significance". On Mr. Harivansh, the PM said he was "gentle and soft-spoken" yet a man of "rigorous action".

The Rajya Sabha's Deputy Chairman Harivansh and Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday. SANSAD TV

While Mr. Pawar has been renominated and Mr. Kharge expects another term, Mr. Harivansh will not return immediately, with the JD(U) nominating Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Union Minister Ramnath Thakur instead.

Mr. Kharge called for longer parliamentary sessions, greater cooperation between the Treasury and the Opposition benches, and a review of Rajya Sabha rules to strengthen democratic functioning. He warned that rising mistrust and frequent expunction of Opposition remarks diluted accountability and weakened institutions.

House Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan said the retirement of 59 Members marked both continuity and renewal in the Rajya Sabha, with one-third of the House changing every two years.

LS extends term of panel examining simultaneous polls

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The term of the Joint Parliamentary Committee examining the Bills seeking to introduce simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies was extended once again on Wednesday.

The Lok Sabha extended the tenure of the panel, headed by senior BJP MP P.P. Chaudhary, till the last week of the Monsoon Session. The extension, moved by Mr. Chaudhary, was adopted by a voice vote.

The simultaneous polls Bills – The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, were introduced on December 17, 2024 in the Lok Sabha and sent for Parliamentary scrutiny. The panel has so far held 17 meetings.

Former Chief Justices B.R. Gavai, Sanjiv Khanna, D.Y. Chandrachud, U.U. Lalit, and J.S. Khehar; senior lawyer-MPs Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi; senior leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and M. Veerappa Moily; former IMF First Deputy Managing Director Gita Gopinath; and Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (EAC-PM) member Sanjeev Sanyal, among others, have appeared before the panel. The EAC-PM released a working paper titled "Estimating Reduction in Polling Personnel Deployment Under Simultaneous Elections" by Mr. Sanyal and EAC-PM Joint Director Satvik Dev, who argued that "One Nation, One Election" may reduce polling personnel deployment by 28%.

Lok Sabha applies 'guillotine' to pass Demands for Grants of ₹53 lakh cr. for Ministries

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha passed the Demands for Grants of various Ministries for 2026-27 on Wednesday. The House approved an expenditure of over ₹53 lakh crore by applying the guillotine, passing the Demands for Grants for various Ministries without a discussion. Earlier, it had discussed Demands for Grants for two Ministries – Agriculture and Railways.

Replying to the debate on agriculture, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the Centre is committed to transform society and shaping the future of the nation. He said the Opposition presented half-truths in the name of farmers' welfare. He said during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, out of 140 major irrigation projects, 99 remained stalled.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan speaks in the Lok Sabha during the second part of the Budget session of Parliament. PTI

"The [Narendra] Modi government brought these projects under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana and placed them on priority. As a result, work is moving rapidly to ensure irrigation coverage for nearly 2.7 million hectares of additional agricultural land," he said.

Maintaining that the new Pesticide and Seed Bills will soon be implemented, he said they were aimed at guaranteeing quality seeds, standard and reliable fertilizers, as well as safe and effective pesticides for farmers.

Earlier, initiating the debate for the Agriculture Ministry, Congress MP Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said 750 farmers died in Punjab during the agitation against the now-repealed farm laws and sought compensation for their families.

House panel terms vacancy situation in UGC, AICTE 'critical'

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

A House panel on Wednesday flagged the "critical vacancy situation" at higher education regulators such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The Union Education Ministry is planning to dismantle both the bodies under its proposed Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025.

The Department-related Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports - headed by Congress Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh - tabled its report on the Department of Higher Education's Demands for Grants for FY 2026-27. It expressed concern about the absence of centralised data on the number of vacancies in Central universities and cautioned the Department against year-end expenditure rush.

It noted the situation at the UGC, saying that "516 out of 763 sanctioned non-teaching positions are vacant", which amounted to a vacancy rate of 67.6%. "This severely impacts UGC's capacity to discharge its statutory functions, including monitoring universities, processing grant proposals, and implementing NEP 2020," it said.

In AICTE, "only 20 posts have been filled on regular/permanent basis in the last six years", adding that 63.6% of sanctioned posts in the middle and senior administrative levels were vacant, which "may hamper the AICTE's operations and the broader technical landscape as it regulates over 10,000 technical institutions".

The panel noted that India's expenditure on education in 2022-23 stood at 4.06% of GDP, below the NEP 2020 target of 6%.

BJP MP seeks sub-quota for OBC in Central schemes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

During Special Mentions at the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, BJP MP from Bihar Bhim Singh called for the sub-categorisation of the 27% Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota for Central schemes, a subject on which a report commissioned by the Centre was submitted in 2023.

Sub-categorisation of the OBC socio-economic category has been done by various State governments for a while now. In 2015, the National Commission for Backward Classes recommended sub-categorising Central OBCs, leading to the Justice G. Rohini Commission in 2017.

"Experience shows, and numerous studies have verified, that providing reservation as a single block is preventing the proper benefits of the 27% reservation from reaching all castes," Mr. Singh said.

ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC continues transfers in West Bengal

The Election Commission (EC) continued to transfer officers of West Bengal on Wednesday. Ten District Magistrates (DM), one Municipal Commissioner, and five Deputy Inspector-Generals of Police (DIG) were transferred.

The newly appointed officers met the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal, Manoj Kumar Agarwal, to review the poll preparedness in the State.

A total of 39 officers have been transferred in the State since the election was announced on Sunday, including top-ranking police officers. The government has been asked to not assign any election-related duties to any of the transferred officers.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had criticised the EC for "favouring the BJP" in making these transfers.

Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal met the newly appointed officers.

Rebellion in Venugopal's home turf

A district Congress leader on Wednesday revolted in AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal's home turf, Alappuzha, over the party's candidates' list for the coming Assembly polls and announced that he would contest as an Independent in the key Kuttanad constituency in Kerala.

Mr. Venugopal represents the Alappuzha constituency in the Lok Sabha.

DCC vice-president Saji Joseph on Wednesday resigned from the party and announced he would contest as an Independent candidate from the Kuttanad Assembly constituency. The leadership's decision to give the Kuttanad seat to the UDF ally, Kerala Congress (Joseph) faction, against the reported request of the local Congress leaders and workers, irked Mr. Joseph and his supporters. PTI

"I think that by pitting Suvendu Adhikari against Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur, we have managed to trap the Trinamool supremo in one corner

DILIP GHOSH
Senior BJP leader

Ex-Trinamool leader's party to contest 182 seats

Expelled Trinamool Congress leader Humayun Kabir on Wednesday announced the first list of 15 candidates for his Aam Janata Unnayan Party, declaring that the outfit would contest 182 seats in the Assembly election in West Bengal. It will field a Muslim candidate against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. PTI

"In three terms, our vote share and representation have expanded because people have seen the benefits of these schemes

JAIPRAKASH MAJUMDAR
Senior Trinamool leader

In a lighter vein: IUML State president Sayyid Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal with P.K. Kunhalikutty in Malappuram, Kerala, on Tuesday. SAKEER HUSSAIN

IUML bets on youth, ushers in generational shift in Kerala

Abdul Latheef Naha
MALAPPURAM

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) leadership, led by State president Sayyid Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal, has sought to quell internal criticism by ushering in a generational shift through its candidate list for the April 9 Kerala Assembly election.

The announcement of candidates on Tuesday surprised many, particularly critics within the party, as it reflected a conscious move to infuse young blood into its legislative ranks. For months, younger members had been quietly demanding greater representation, and the list of the 25 candidates appears to address those concerns.

The party has introduced 11 new faces, including six young leaders, two women, and one non-Muslim candidate. The move was widely welcomed by party workers, especially the youth.

Notable picks

Among the notable picks are Fathima Tahilia for Perambra, T.P. Ashraf Ali for Kondotty, P.K. Firoz for Koduvally, V.K. Faisal Babu for Kozhikode South, and P.K. Navas for Tanur. All of them represent the party's younger leadership.

The other woman candidate, Jayanthi Rajan, a non-Muslim woman, will contest from Koothuparamba in the Kannur district. Ms. Rajan, a former panchayat member of the IUML, also expressed happiness about her candidature.

"We have considered all sections and held extensive consultations before finalising the list," said Mr. Thangal.

The leadership further signalled its intent by fielding K.M. Shaji in Vengara, a stronghold vacated by national general secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty, who has shifted to Malappuram.

However, the transition has not been without friction. Party State secretary Abdurahman Randathani stirred a controversy by criticising the selection of P.M.A. Sameer in Tirurangadi. But, Mr. Sameer's candidature has found support among sections of the party's youth.

While the Women's League, the party's women's wing, has expressed dissatisfaction over the selection of the two women candidates, political analyst G. Gopakumar described the IUML leadership's decision as a "very welcoming and progressive move".

The IUML had earlier hinted at a generational transition during the local body election by limiting repeat candidates. The appointment of younger leaders like A.P. Smiji to key local posts had also signalled a shift towards inclusivity and renewal.

Many within the party view this as its most significant generational change since 1991, when leaders like Mr. Kunhalikutty and E.T. Mohammed Basheer rose to prominence at relatively young ages. Today, in contrast, the party's legislative leadership has aged considerably.

Nine sitting MLAs

Nine sitting MLAs have been retained, while several senior leaders have been dropped to make way for new entrants, underscoring the leadership's attempt to balance continuity with change.

Overall, the candidate list marks a decisive shift in the IUML's approach: one that seeks to rejuvenate the party while managing internal dissent.

(With PTI inputs)

'Double engine' faces test in Puducherry as NDA's stability pitch meets Opposition attack

The AINRC-BJP front has been cultivating a perception of stable governance; it is also banking on welfare delivery; the INDIA bloc's attack will likely revolve around the 'promises-versus-delivery' gap of the Rangasamy govt., rising unemployment, perceived neglect of the U.T. in the Union Budget

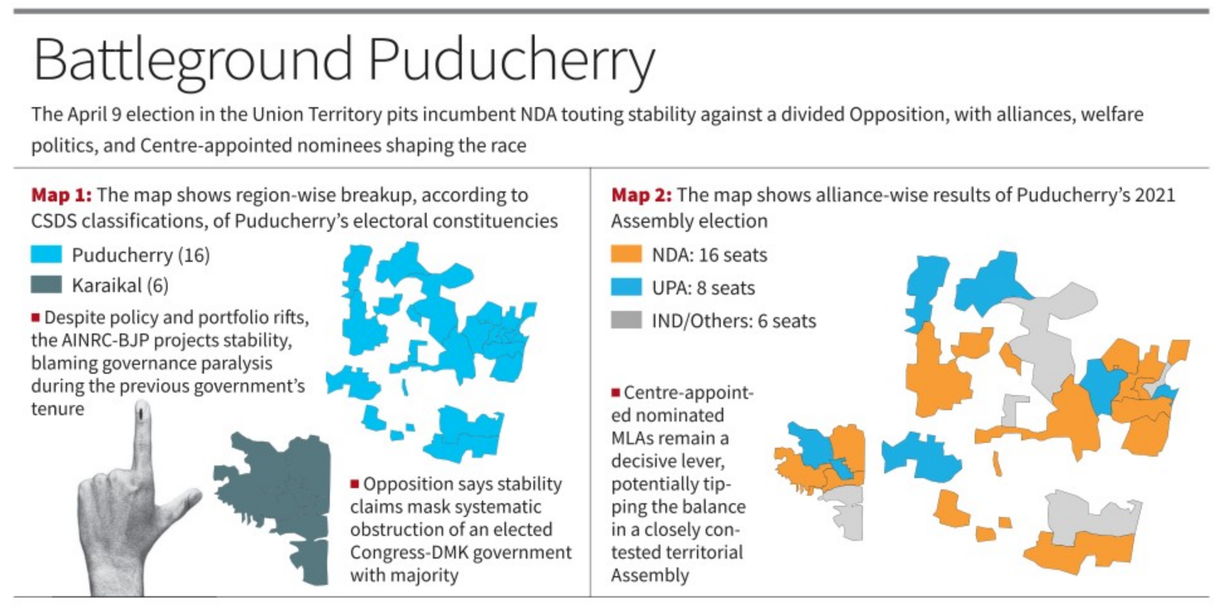
IN FOCUS

M. Dinesh Varma
PUDUCHERRY

Puducherry, which saw its first-ever AINRC-BJP government installed in 2021, gets its earliest opportunity to deliver a verdict on five years of the much-touted "double-engine" governance model when the Union Territory goes to the polls on April 9.

The All India N.R. Congress (AINRC), led by four-time Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, leads the headcount in the current 15th Legislative Assembly with 10 MLAs, while its ally, the BJP, has six. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the principal Opposition party, has six MLAs and the Congress two, while there are six Independents.

The run-up to this election can turn out to be a tame affair in comparison to the tumultuous phase that preceded the previous Assembly election. There was a long-drawn stand-off between former Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy and then Lieutenant-Governor Kiran Bedi over governance rights. His dharna in front of the Raj Nivas over Ms. Bedi's "authoritarian and obstructionist" ways, and election-eve defections, eventually precipitated the collapse of the Congress government on February 22, 2021, barely weeks before completing its term.


Battleground Puducherry
The April 9 election in the Union Territory pits incumbent NDA touting stability against a divided Opposition, with alliances, welfare politics, and Centre-appointed nominees shaping the race
Map 1: The map shows region-wise breakup, according to CSDS classifications, of Puducherry's electoral constituencies
Puducherry (16)
Karaikal (6)
Despite policy and portfolio rifts, the AINRC-BJP projects stability, blaming governance paralysis during the previous government's tenure
Opposition says stability claims mask systematic obstruction of an elected Congress-DMK government with majority
Map 2: The map shows alliance-wise results of Puducherry's 2021 Assembly election
NDA: 16 seats
UPA: 8 seats
IND/Others: 6 seats
Centre-appointed nominated MLAs remain a decisive lever, potentially tipping the balance in a closely contested territorial Assembly

The AINRC-BJP front, in spite of signs of a rift over policy matters and portfolio allocation, has been cultivating a perception of stable governance – Mr. Rangasamy has especially attacked the confrontationist style of his predecessor, which he believes precipitated a governance crisis and development stalemate.

The counterview in the Opposition camp is that such a claim obscures the cause and only projects the effects of systematically impeding the functioning of an elected government that had begun its 2016-21 term with a comfortable majority of 15 Congress members and two DMK MLAs.

The bottom line of the 2021 verdict was that the Congress, which strutted about the political landscape of Puducherry as a dominant force for decades, failed to make a convincing case before the electorate and ended up with just two seats.

Seat-sharing talks

While the party may have recovered its standing when its candidate V. Vaithilingam trounced sitting BJP Minister A. Namassivayam by 1.36 lakh votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the ghosts of its 2021 debacle continue to haunt the party, especially in preserving its leadership role in the INDIA bloc. That the DMK, having emerged as the principal Opposition, appears keen to reset the power equation has not eased matters.

DMK Puducherry convener and Leader of the Opposition R. Siva has repeatedly pitched the idea for ushering in a "Dravidian model" government in the Union Territory, but what has further ruffled feathers in the Congress camp was when DMK MP and Puducherry in-charge S. Jagathrakshakan chaired a preliminary round of seat-sharing discussions separately with each of the allies in the INDIA bloc – the CPI(M), the CPI, and the VCK. This power struggle is one of the reasons why seat-sharing talks between the Congress and the DMK have hardly been a smooth sailing.

In contrast, the NDA has been able to evolve a broad agreement among allies. Last week, the coalition announced a seat-sharing formula modelled on the 2021 pattern, with the AINRC contesting 16 seats and the BJP and others splitting the remaining 14 seats.

Nirmal Kumar Surana, BJP in-charge for Puducherry, who was here for talks with Mr. Rangasamy along with Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, had also hinted at expanding the alliance, with the Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi likely to enter the NDA fold. A point of interest surrounds the number of seats allotted to the AIADMK, which had contested five seats in 2021 but drew a blank.

While the Naam Tamilar Katchi, which finished ahead of the AIADMK in the 2024 Lok Sabha results, will field candidates in 28 Assembly constituencies, it remains to be seen if Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam makes good its founder-president Vijay's announcement to contest in Puducherry in December 2025.

As the rival fronts hit the campaign trail, the NDA will try to smother the anti-incumbency factor by projecting the stability and welfare orientation of its term.

Course correction

In recent months, the Rangasamy government has, in an apparent course correction, reopened ration shops that were shut after the Direct Benefit Transfer system of cash in lieu of rice was imposed by the Centre during the Congress term, and restored rice distribution through the Public Distribution System. The government has also been filling vacancies and rolling out a slew of welfare measures, such as financial assistance to women heads of BPL families and a hike in pension for old and destitute persons.

The NDA will also look to extract political capital from the unveiling of projects worth about ₹2,700 crore by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March.

The INDIA bloc's attack will likely revolve around the "promises-versus-delivery gap" of the Rangasamy government, rising unemployment, perceived neglect of the UT in the Union Budget, deterioration in law and order, drug menace, exposure of a sensational temple land grab case, and a fake drug manufacturing racket with nation-wide ramifications. The Opposition has also charged that Mr. Rangasamy's fourth stint as Chief Minister has been marked by an acquiescence to the BJP, a failure to stand up for federal rights, and a hollow commitment to the statehood cause.

Protests erupt in Bengal over Trinamool poll picks; axed MLAs mulling retirement

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A day after the Trinamool Congress announced candidates for the 2026 West Bengal Assembly polls, discontent surfaced among several party leaders who were denied ticket.

Protests erupted at Amdanga in the North 24 Parganas on Wednesday after three-time MLA from Amdanga, Rafiqur Rahaman, was denied ticket. His supporters blocked roads and burnt tyres while Mr. Rahaman urged the party leadership to reconsider their decision. The Trinamool has replaced the MLA with Peerzada Kasem Siddiqui, who hails from a family of religious leaders.

Protest erupted at Jibantala in Canning Purba Assembly seat in South 24 Parganas after the party decided to field MLA Saokat Molla from the Bhangar Assembly seat in the same district. Mr. Molla, an influential leader, wants to contest from Canning Purba. His supporters blocked roads by burning tyres at Jibantala.

Losing temper: Protests were held at Jibantala over the Trinamool's ticket distribution on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Express anguish

In the list of candidates announced on Tuesday, the Trinamool dropped 74 legislators and shifted 15 MLAs to different constituencies. Several MLAs expressed anguish and said they would go into political retirement.

Senior MLA Asit Majumdar has been denied ticket from Chinsurah, and the party named Debangshu Bhattacharya as the candidate from the seat instead. Mr. Majumdar, said he had reached out to Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee over the development, and added that he was considering political retirement.

Among the MLAs who have been dropped is Tajmul Hossain from Harischandrapur constituency in Malda district. Mr. Hossain, who is a Minister in the outgoing Cabinet, said he had been "betrayed" by the party. Protests were also reported from Islampur, where senior MLA Abdul Karim Chowdhury was dropped.

Day after quitting Congress in Assam, senior leader Pradyut Bordoloi joins BJP

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Assam Congress is wary of the possible impact of losing one of its three MPs from the State to the BJP, a month after its former State president Bhupen Kumar Borah jumped ship.

Pradyut Bordoloi, who represented the grand old party from Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency, joined the BJP on Wednesday. Mr. Bordoloi was the chairman of the Congress's Manifesto Committee.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, chairperson of the party's Screening Committee for candidates, said the MP's resignation was unfortunate. "I think he was upset over one ticket allocation. I wish we had a chance for a conversation," she said. However, senior Congress leaders indicated Mr. Bordoloi had been planning to don saffron for a long time.

Jitendra Singh, AICC secretary in charge of Assam, pointed out that the candidate Mr. Bordoloi objected to did not figure in the two lists released so far. "This means we were considering Pradyut Bordoloiji's recommendations. I have spoken to him on this a couple of times, and he knew my stand. One thing is clear: As politicians, we should realise that we are elected by our voters to represent them with dignity and sincerity and not to sell their votes as a negotiator," Mr. Singh said on X.

In a letter to Mr. Singh a few days ago, Mr. Bordoloi threatened to quit if the party re-nominated MLA Asif Mohammad Nazar from the Laharighat constituency. The seat is part of the Muslim-majority Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency, which Mr. Bordoloi represents.

Congress leaders in Assam have put up a brave front, insisting that a series of resignations was a boon in disguise. They accused the defectors of having been "BJP agents". A section within the party, however, said the resignations of Mr. Borah and Mr. Bordoloi in quick succession could affect the party's morale as it heads to the polls.

Jumping ship: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, left, and BJP Assam president Dilip Saikia welcome MP Pradyut Bordoloi. PTI

INBRIEF

Modi, Kuwait Crown Prince discuss West Asia over call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, on a telephonic conversation, exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia with Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and said ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz remained the foremost priority. The two leaders agreed that sustained diplomatic engagement remained essential for regional peace and stability. The Prime Minister reiterated India's condemnation of attacks on Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Mr. Modi also thanked the Crown Prince for the continued support for the safety and well-being of the Indian community in Kuwait. PTI

Meta moves HC against CCPA fine over walkie-talkie sale

Meta on Wednesday challenged in the Delhi High Court a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) order imposing a ₹10 lakh penalty on it for alleged unauthorised sale and listing of walkie-talkies on the Facebook Marketplace. Meta's counsel submitted that, unlike Amazon and Flipkart, Facebook was not an e-market but merely a "notice board", and therefore, the CCPA has no jurisdiction over it. The court posted Meta's petition for hearing on March 25, asking it to explain how the order can be termed "without jurisdiction". It also asked Meta why the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission cannot consider the issue.

China-bound Russian oil tanker diverted to India

Aqua Titan, carrying 7.7 lakh barrels of crude, makes U-turn in Southeast Asia, to reach Mangalore port on Friday; analyst says ship is a part of the 'dark fleet' mostly controlled by the Russian state

Debayan Tewari
Anil Kumar Sastry
CHENNAI/MANGALURU

A crude oil tanker that set sail from Primorsk in Russia for Rizhao port in China has changed course in Southeast Asia and is now heading towards the New Mangalore port with 1.1 lakh tonnes (7.7 lakh barrels) of Urals crude, showed ship-tracking data. The ship is expected to reach Mangaluru on March 20.

According to marinetraffic.com, *Aqua Titan*, a Cameroon-registered tanker, left the Russian port on January 18. It anchored at Port Suez and departed on February 21, showed vesselfinder.com.

Sources in the New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA) told *The Hindu* that *Aqua Titan's* arrival would boost the confidence of the refiner, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL). They said with one tanker already discharging Russian Urals crude at the Single Point Mooring (SPM) on Wednesday, the NMPA would receive at least three more tankers by month-end.

A tanker discharging crude oil at the Single Point Mooring of New Mangalore Port dedicated to MRPL off Mangaluru. FILE PHOTO

Ships originating from Primorsk usually take the route via Suez Canal to reach India's west coast on the Arabian Sea. But ship-tracking website Equasis said the *Aqua Titan* was seen in North Europe and West Europe in January, South Asia in February, Southeast Asia and Singapore Strait in March, indicating that it circumvented India and then made a U-turn in Southeast Asia to head to India.

Usually, chartered ships do not change course midway. But the *Aqua Titan* is a sanctioned vessel. "This is a highly sanctioned fleet owned by the Russian government... so the transparency is even worse. Essentially, the dark fleet vessels are controlled by the Russian state in the end," said Erik Grundt, senior analyst, Rystad Energy, an energy intelligence company based in Norway.

Apparently, the vessel made a U-turn in mid-March after the U.S. said India could import Russian crude for 30 days.

Saudi crude on the way

With the closure of the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabian crude is now being diverted through the Yanbu Port that houses King Fahd Industrial Port on the Red Sea, NMPA sources said. Yanbu, located on the Western Coast of Saudi Arabia, has the East-West Petroline Terminal. Though longer, the route avoids the volatile Strait of Hormuz thereby offering a safe passage to tankers.

While one oil tanker with 1.36 lakh tonnes of crude left Yanbu on Tuesday, another was being loaded with 2.6 lakh tonnes of crude for Mangalore. With crude from two Russian tankers and two from Saudi Arabia, the MRPL will have enough stock. The refiner, with an installed capacity of refining 18.2 million tonnes of crude per annum, roughly requires about 1.5 million tonnes of crude a month.

So far in March, the NMPA has handled two tankers at the SPM and three coastal crude vessels at the main port, sources said.

Ever since the conflict began in West Asia affecting supply of petroleum products to India, the Mangalore port has waived cargo charges both for crude and LPG tankers, they added. For one lakh tonne crude, the cargo charges would come to around ₹34 lakh. Vessel-handling charges, however, would continue to be collected. For LPG Tanker *Shivalik* that was supposed to arrive at New Mangalore Port with 26,000 tonnes of LPG, the port had promised to waive ₹50 lakh cargo charges.

Centre tells airlines to curb extra fees for seat selection

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Families must not have to pay extra for adjacent seats, the Ministry said.

The Civil Aviation Ministry has directed airlines to make at least 60% of seats on every flight available for selection at no additional cost beyond the airfare, following concerns that passengers were increasingly being charged for seat allocation.

Passengers booked under the same Passenger Name Record (PNR) must be seated together, the Ministry said in a statement. This is aimed at preventing situations where families, particularly those travelling with children, are forced to pay extra to secure adjacent seats.

'Urgent intervention'

The Ministry has also asked airlines and booking agents to clearly and prominently display passenger entitlements in cases of delays, cancellations, and baggage loss. This information must be made accessible at booking counters as well as during the travel process, it said, in a bid to improve transparency and passenger awareness.

The directions come as the Supreme Court is hearing a public interest litigation seeking regulatory guidelines to curb sharp fluctuations in airfares and ancillary charges imposed by airlines. During a hearing on February 23, a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta granted the Centre four weeks to complete its deliberations and inform the court of the outcome.

The matter is scheduled to be heard next on March 23.

The plea, filed by social activist S. Laxminarayanan, calls for the establishment of a robust and independent regulator to ensure transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector. It argued that the State's inaction in regulating fare algorithms, cancellation policies, service continuity, and grievance mechanisms amounted to a dereliction of its constitutional duty, warranting urgent judicial intervention.

Are sale of books, making of *prasadam* by temples industrial activities, asks SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned whether activities such as publication and sale of books and manufacture of food associated with temples can be considered an industry.

The oral observation came from Justice B.V. Nagarathna, who is part of a nine-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant examining the ambit of the definition of 'industry' and whether it would include charities and hospitals.

The question was posed to the Commissioner of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments in Tamil Nadu. Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, appearing for the Commissioner, referred to High Court decisions that temple trust activities such as manufacturing *prasadam*, running hotels or operating transport were an "industry" under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and an "establishment" under the Shops and Establishments Act.

Justice Nagarathna said she had authored a single-judge Bench judgment in the Karnataka High Court which had held that a temple was not an establishment under the Karnataka Shops and Establishments Act.

"But a Full Bench of the Madras High Court had held a temple to be an 'industry'. The Orissa High Court had held the Jagannath temple to be an 'industry'," Mr. Gupta responded to the judge.

He said temple trusts create food as *prasadam*. "None of it is created for commercial purposes. The Ramakrishna Mission sells books. But they would give it to you also for free. Their purpose is to propagate their religious practices. *Prasadam* is primarily for spiritual purposes. We partake in *prasadam* not to assuage hunger but to partake in a spiritual exercise," he argued.

India showing steady progress in reducing child deaths amid slowing global gains: report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

An estimated 4.9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2024 worldwide, including 2.3 million newborns, according to the latest estimates released by a UN report on child mortality. The report, released on Wednesday, said that most of these deaths were preventable with proven, low-cost interventions, and access to quality healthcare.

The report titled "Levels and Trends in Child Mortality" added that under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000. However, since 2015, this pace has slowed by more than 60%.

However, India is among the countries demonstrating steady progress in reducing child mortality through sustained public health efforts. The latest United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNIGME) Report, 2025 states that the status of neonatal mortality rate reduction in India has shown progress.

The Union Health Ministry added that India, over the past two decades, has played a pivotal role in reducing child mortality in the South Asia region.

The Ministry, in its release, said that the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) recorded a decline since 1990. In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live births, which fell to 17 in 2024.

Also, the Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) witnessed a sharp fall – in 1990, the U5MR stood at 127 per 1,000 live births, while in 2024, it declined to 27.

Under-5 deaths dropped from 127 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 27 in 2024.

"This sharp reduction is due to targeted public health interventions, improved institutional delivery systems, and expanded immunisation coverage," the Ministry said.

The UN report found that an estimated 2.1 million children, adolescents, and youth - in the age group of 5-24 - died in 2024. Infectious diseases and injuries remain leading causes among younger children, while self-harm is the leading cause among girls aged 15 to 19, and road traffic injuries among boys.

"This year's report for the first time estimates deaths directly caused by severe acute malnutrition. It found more than 1,00,000 children aged 1-59 months – or 5% – died from it in 2024. The toll is far greater when indirect effects are considered, as malnutrition weakens children's immunity and increases their risk of dying from common childhood diseases," the report by the UNIGME states.

Mortality data also frequently fail to capture severe acute malnutrition as an underlying cause of death, suggesting the burden is likely substantially underestimated. Some of the countries with the highest numbers of direct deaths from severe acute malnutrition include Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.

Newborn deaths account for nearly half of all under-five deaths. Leading causes of newborn deaths were complications from preterm birth (36%), and complications during labour and delivery (21%).

Beyond the first month, infectious diseases, including malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia were major killers. Malaria remained the single largest killer in this age group (17%), with most deaths occurring in endemic areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

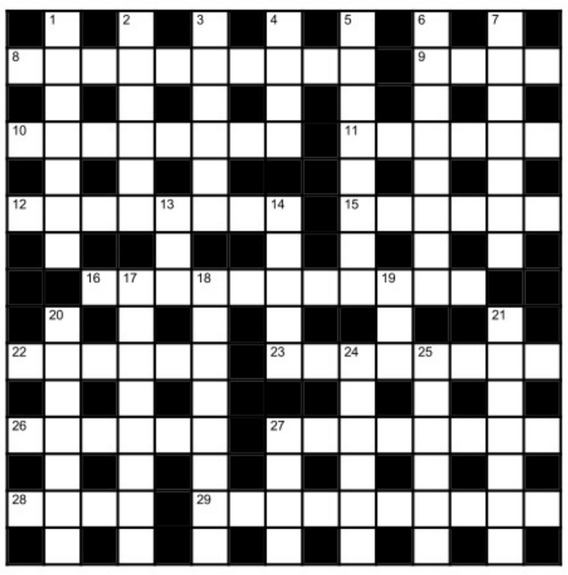
In 2024, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 58% of all under-five deaths.

TH CROSSWORD + 14745

(set by Vidwan)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Unveil jersey for professional horse rider (10)
9 Fail to cut and fall (4)
10 Most splendid, model kind of hair damage (5,3)
11 Lifeless and completely overwhelmed by depression after retiring (6)
12 A strong hand stretched to gratify (4,4)
15 Solicitor spending time on good turns occasionally to excel (6)
16 Stop or cap it subtly for making chip (6,5)
22 Kid involved in urban terrorism (6)
23 Genetics deciphered it? Yes, internally! (8)
26 Make something neat! It's possibly stupidity! (4,2)
27 Use nice grand solution for upgrading race (8)
28 India's first scam superstar (4)
29 Mirth rating possibly for Italian Vermouth (10)

Down

1 Juvenile worker's small trip with ruffian, going north (4,3)
2 Absconding fellow grovelling for shelter (6)
3 Lover welcomes your company (6)
4 Personal article in Europe Daily (2-2)
5 Software security flaw is bit about disheartened doctor (4,4)
6 Inspiration for a poet - a loud set from America (8)
7 Firm and devoted liberal (7)
13 Regularly sweat to get established (3)
14 Canine is also half of this! (5)
17 Cold, dishonest and isolated (8)
18 See rapid changes in jet's pace (8)
19 Rage, without feminine passion (3)
20 Gujarat river, essential internally for cassava root product (7)
21 Boy getting parasite label that clings (5-2)
24 Fix our suffering (6)
25 Mark of French-English School on head (6)
27 Kind of lean style (4)

SUDOKU

4		8	1		3	2		
	1						8	
		6		9	5			
2							5	
5		1				3		7
	7							2
			4	6		8		
	4						2	
		2	5		7	6		1

No.SS6824 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

■	E	C	C	L	E	S	I	A	S	T	I	C	A	L
G	■	A	■	L	■	A	■	S	■	O	■	R	■	E
A	O	R	T	A	■	N	O	S	E	P	I	E	C	E
L	■	C	■	M	■	M	■	A	■	S	■	S	■	T
O	K	I	N	A	W	A	■	M	A	E	S	T	R	I
S	■	N	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	C	■	■	■	D
H	B	O	M	B	■	I	N	T	E	R	P	O	S	E
■	■	M	■	O	■	N	■	E	■	E	■	D	■	■
G	L	A	S	S	W	O	O	L	■	T	I	D	A	L
R	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	M	■	A
A	T	H	W	A	R	T	■	G	Y	M	N	A	S	T
P	■	A	■	N	■	R	■	E	■	O	■	N	■	H
P	A	V	L	O	V	I	A	N	■	L	O	O	S	E
A	■	O	■	V	■	P	■	I	■	A	■	U	■	R
S	O	C	I	A	L	S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y	■

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	1	8	6	7	9	3	5	2
6	5	3	8	4	2	7	1	9
2	9	7	3	5	1	8	4	6
7	2	9	1	8	5	6	3	4
3	6	1	9	2	4	5	8	7
8	4	5	7	3	6	2	9	1
5	3	2	4	1	7	9	6	8
9	8	4	2	6	3	1	7	5
1	7	6	5	9	8	4	2	3

FAITH

Madhurakavi Azhvar's quest

Madhurakavi Azhvar was born in Thirukkolur in Tamil Nadu. He had studied the Vedas, but could not fully comprehend them, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. So, he began to seek a preceptor to guide him. He journeyed northwards, looking for a spiritual guru. His aim was to travel all the way to the Himalayas, and find the perfect teacher. He halted at Ayodhya and performed evening rituals. This involved offering worship to the four directions. He faced east first, and offered his salutations to the east. He then faced south, west and finally north to pay his obeisance to the directions. But when he faced the southern direction, he noticed a bright light, which he did not find in any of the other directions.

He took this as an indication that the guru he sought lived in the south. He gave up his plan to go to the Himalayan region, but turned back towards the south. He kept following the light, and eventually reached a place called Thirukkurugoor. The people of the village told Madhurakavi Azhvar about a boy whose behaviour was quite extraordinary. This boy had never eaten anything for sustenance. He had never cried even as a baby, and was always in meditation. Madhurakavi Azhvar felt this boy might be the guru he was looking for, and he visited the tamarind tree in which the boy lived. Madhurakavi asked him a Vedantic question. Until then the boy had never responded to anyone. But now he gave a reply to Madhurakavi Azhvar's question, and it was a reply that stunned the latter. Madhurakavi Azhvar realised that the boy was his chosen guru. That boy was none other than the great Vaishnavite saint Nammazhvar, revered by Sri Vaishnavas.

INBRIEF

Ethyl chloroformate imports from China: India opens probe

India on Tuesday opened an anti-dumping investigation into ethyl chloroformate imports from China after a domestic producer alleged the chemical used in pharmaceutical and agrochemical manufacturing was being sold at unfairly low prices. The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), under the federal trade ministry, said it initiated the probe following an application by Paushak that alleged that imports from China had caused "material injury" to domestic producers. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In December, India imposed a three-year import tariff of 11% to 13% on some steel imports, in an effort to curb cheap Chinese products. Ethyl chloroformate is an organic chemical intermediate widely used in pharmaceutical and agrochemical manufacturing. REUTERS

Five working groups proposed on health insurance

Five strategic working groups co-chaired by leaders from the healthcare and insurance industries will be set up on various issues concerning health insurance and formalise a roadmap for systemic reforms. The aim is to improve insurance penetration, transparency and the overall patient experience by addressing long-standing operational gaps and coordination issues between insurers and healthcare providers. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) announced this following a high-level industry interaction on March 17 in which Chairman Ajay Seth participated. Most of the working groups are scheduled to begin work in April, with durations ranging from 2-4 months. The findings and recommendations from these groups will serve as a reference model for future industry standards and regulatory frameworks, the insurance regulator said in a release.

Plastic goods prices to rise 60% as war impacts polymer

Prices of polymer, derived from crude oil and natural gas, have risen by 50-60% creating margin pressure; plastic manufacturers managing with stocks procured prior to W. Asia war outbreak

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Plastic product prices are expected to rise by 50-60% from April if the West Asia crisis continues to impact supply of key raw material, mainly crude oil, industry officials said. They said the prices of polymer, derived from crude oil and natural gas, have risen by 50-60% in the last few days, creating margin pressure.

Plastic manufacturers said they are yet to fully pass on the additional financial burden to customers as they are managing with the inventory procured well before the war broke out. But stocks are fast depleting, they said.

"Manufacturers are procuring raw material based on the order on a day-to-day basis and pricing the supplies based on the raw material price," said Sunil Shah, president, All India Plastics Manufacturers' Association (AIPMA).

Burden of cost: The price of a small water bottle, which is ₹2 now, is expected to go up to more than ₹3. R. VENGADESH

"The cost of a small water bottle is about ₹2 and if prices rise it would cost more than ₹3. It all depends on the bottled water brand to either absorb that cost or pass it on to buyers. Similarly, the price of a 20-litre plastic water bottle, which is about ₹110 now, can go up sharply," industry officials said.

Confirming that polymer prices had gone up over the last few weeks, Arvind M Mehta, chairman, All India Plastics Manufacturers Association said despite the price hike, exports could continue. "For exports, we are positive because our international competitors will have the same raw material price," Mr. Mehta said. The increasing cost of packaging materials has also threatened to inflate the price of food items in the retail market. Rice producers in Kangayam, a rice mill hub in Tamil Nadu, said the bags they used to pack 26 kg of rice used to cost ₹23 a piece. Now, it is ₹29 a piece. "We have local suppliers who get the packing material in rolls and stitch it for us according to our requirement. There is a delay in getting those bags too. We buy another type of bag from Gujarat. The prices of both these varieties of bags have shot up," said Palaniswamy, president of the Kangayam Rice Mill Association.

The oil mill owners in Kangayam said they pack edible oil in plastic bottles or pouches. A bottle that used to cost ₹10 is now sold for ₹15. The oil mills have told their bulk buyers that they may increase the end product prices if this continues for a month. In Tiruppur, leading brands and all hosiery manufacturers for the domestic market have announced that hosiery products will be priced ₹7 more apiece as the cost of inputs have shot up.

(With inputs from Soundariya Preetha in Coimbatore)

Centre offers 10% additional LPG to States, UTs that fast track CGD network

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Seeking to enhance penetration of piped natural gas (PNG) among commercial entities whilst attempting to support supplies of liquified petroleum gas (LPG), which has been constrained due to tensions in West Asia, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has written to State governments and Union Territories, offering to allocate them an additional 10% of cooking gas provided they facilitated speedy expansion of city gas distribution (CGD) networks.

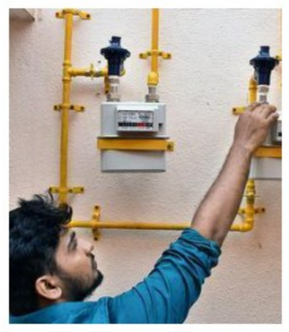
The Ministry also sought to provide more supplies in a tiered structure, should States meet certain 'eligibility criteria' for supporting the transition to piped gas. If met, the MoPNG said it would allow an additional supply of up to 4% of commercial LPG.

"Through the letter, all States and UTs have been offered an additional 10% of LPG allocation provided they help in expediting expansion of the CGD network," Joint Secretary at MoPNG Sujata Sharma told reporters.

The Centre underlined that its push for PNG is to ease the pressure on LPG.

India imports 60% of its consumption requirements, of which 90% is routed through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively shut.

On the availability of natural gas in India, Ms. Sharma said, "We have sufficient stocks of LNG and



The Centre underlined that its push for PNG is to ease the pressure on LPG.

that is primarily one of the reasons that we are asking consumers to shift to PNG."

She said more than 1.2 lakh new PNG connections had been distributed in the past two weeks. This is inclusive of domestic, industrial and commercial users, alongside CNG stations. An additional 1% of commercial LPG would be allocated should States constitute committees for approving pending applications of CGDs and resolve their grievances. Another 2% would be allocated if CGDs are given deemed approvals.

States would be able to avail yet another 3% LPG allocation if they introduced "dig and restore" scheme for CGD entities.

At the daily inter-ministerial press briefing, Ms. Sharma also mentioned that 15 States have begun supplies of commercial LPG. These include Bihar, Chhattisgarh Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, among others.

Analysts forecast cut in oil firms' earnings

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Elevated crude premiums, currency depreciation and mounting freight costs will hit the earnings of oil marketing companies (OMCs) in fiscal 2027, according to analyst reports.

"We are reducing our FY 2027E earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) by 45-47% for BPCL and HPCL and 28% for IOCL. We also cut FY 2028E EBITDA by 3-8%. Further firming up in oil prices could push OMCs into losses in FY2027E," Kotak Institutional Equities said in its report, recommending clients to sell the stocks.

"With integrated margin under pressure and share of refining margin in overall integrated margin increasing, companies with higher earnings sensitivity to marketing margins will be the most negatively impacted. For every INR 1/ltr decrease in marketing margin, IOCL/BPCL/HPCL's FY27 EPS reduces by 21/20/24%," HDFC Securities said in a note.

"Given that IOCL has a lower marketing mix in the overall volume, it should fare better compared with peers like BPCL and HPCL in the near term," it added.

Solar ingot plan to take off June '28, boost local output

Jacob P Koshy
NEW DELHI

In a bid to boost local output of solar ingots and wafers - constituents of solar cells fitted on solar panels - the Ministry for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) said from June 2028, only ingots and wafers made in India would be eligible for domestic projects.

It did this by announcing the Approved List of Module Manufacturers (ALMM) List-III for Ingots and Wafers – a list of firms making the components – on Wednesday. As of date, such an ALMM list exists for manufacturers of solar cells and modules. The ALMM is a compulsory registration regime by the MNRE, first issued in 2019.

India mulls adding 280 GW of solar capacity by 2030.

In Govt.-funded plans

Only ALMM-listed modules can be used in government-funded, open-access and net-metering solar projects such as PM Surya Ghar and PM Kusum scheme and Solar Energy Corporation of India tenders. Only domestic produce are eligible for Production-Linked incentives.

Grandfathering clauses

"Suitable grandfathering provisions have been built in to protect projects already in the pipeline. The current order of MNRE extends mandatory sourcing needs from ALMM lists already in place for modules and cells, one step further up the solar supply chain to include ingots and wafers, which now are heavily import-dependent," the MNRE said.

India has targeted adding 280 GW of solar capacity by 2030 and installed about 132 GW as of November 2025.

Producers make a pitch for increasing use of ethanol

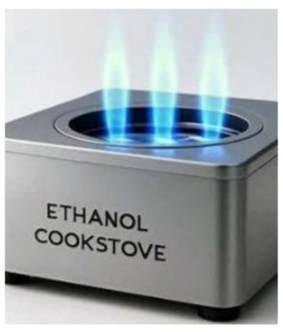
The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The Indian Sugar & Bioenergy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) has written to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), urging the Government for a fast-tracked and calibrated roadmap for ethanol blending beyond E20.

'Initiate a pilot'

The Grain Ethanol Manufacturers Association recently appealed to the Centre to initiate a study or pilot programme to examine technical feasibility, safety standards and economic viability of ethanol-based cooking solutions.

With the Iran war resulting in higher oil prices and



An ethanol based cook stove.

LPG shortage, they want the government to promote the use of ethanol.

India now imports almost 85% of crude oil. The West Asia tensions and disruptions in global shipping routes showed vulnerabilities in global energy supply chains, ISMA said.

India now has an installed distillation capacity of almost 2,000 crore litre (including both sugar- and grain-based ethanol), with sugar sector contributing about 900 crore litre. The ethanol need for achieving E20 blending is estimated at about 1,100 crore litre a year indicating only about 55% of the installed capacity will be used.

"India possesses adequate local ethanol production capacity to move beyond E20, making this an opportune moment for a calibrated and forward-looking roadmap," said Deepak Ballani, DG, ISMA,

"Advancing higher ethanol blends, phased roll-out of flex-fuel vehicles will boost value retention within domestic economy."

CPCL
Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise & a group Company of IndianOil)
[CIN – L40101TN1965GOI005389]
Regd. Office: No.536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018
Website: www.cpcl.co.in Email ID: shankarp@cpcl.co.in Phone No.: (044)24346807

NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS

SPECIAL WINDOW FOR RE-LODGEMENT OF TRANSFER REQUESTS OF PHYSICAL SHARES

Pursuant to SEBI Circular dated 30th January 2026, shareholders are informed that a special window has been re-opened only for re-lodgement of transfer deeds along with physical share certificates which were lodged prior to the deadline of 1st April 2019 and were rejected/returned/not attended to, due to deficiency in the documents/ process or otherwise.

This facility of re-lodgement will be available to the eligible physical shareholders till **4th February 2027**. Shareholders are requested to re-submit their transfer requests along with physical share certificates with our Registrar and Share Transfer Agent, KFin Technologies Ltd. whose details are given below:

KFin Technologies Ltd.
Unit: Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
Selenium Tower B, Plot number 31 & 32
Financial District, Nanakramguda
Hyderabad - 500032
Toll Free No – 1800 309 4001
E-mail Address: einward.ris@kfintech.com

For Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
Sd/-
Place : Chennai
Date : 17th March 2026
P. Shankar
Company Secretary

Cabinet okays ₹33,660-cr. BHAVYA plan for 100 industrial parks by '32

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore for the development of 100 'plug-and-play' industrial parks across the country.

The aim was to create 100 "future ready" industrial parks integrated with the PM GatiShakti to make use of the latter's multi-modal connectivity and last-mile access.

"These parks will set new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability, reducing inefficiencies and enhancing productivity across sectors," the government said.

Manufacturing boost: KINFRA integrated industrial park in Kerala. K. K. MUSTAFAH. (FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY)

As per Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia, the scheme's duration would be for six years starting 2026-27. The first phase would see 50 parks being set up.

The minimum land need for the parks would be 100 acre in most cases, and 25 acre for industrial parks in hilly or North Eastern States. The maximum size is 1,000 acre.

States, pvt. sector

While the Union government will provide up to ₹1 crore per acre, the scheme is meant to involve State governments as well as the private sector.

"At the heart of BHAVYA lies a strong push for deregulation and ease of doing business, with streamlined approvals, effective single-window systems, and investor-friendly reforms led by States," the government said.

CCI gets ₹1,719 crore to pay support price

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a funding of ₹ 1,718.56 crore to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) to meet the minimum support price (MSP) needs for the cotton season 2023-24. The Government said the move is aimed at providing direct price support to cotton farmers in India.

The Centre hoped this intervention would stabilise cotton prices, prevent distress sales, and ensure better returns to farmers.

The MSP per quintal of medium staple cotton was ₹6,620 and ₹7,020 for long staple cotton, in the 2023-24 season. During that season, with an estimated 114.47 lakh hectares under cultivation and production pegged at 325.22 lakh bales, this accounted for nearly 25% of global cotton output, the release noted.

Such interventions play a crucial role in stabilising prices.

RAJASTHAN HIGH COURT BENCH AT JAIPUR
SB/DB Civil writ petition No. ...../2026

CASE TITLE :
Any Effected Person
Vs.
State of Raj. & Ors.
Application Rule 159 of Rajasthan High Court Rules for entering in to CAVEAT

May it please your lordships :

Your Lordship's humble applicant wants to enter into caveat under Rule 159 of the Rajasthan High Court Rules and let nothing be done till the applicants are heard in the matter.
The particulars of the Appeal / Revision which is likely to be filed are given below:-

The following persons may file the appeal:-
Any Effected Person.
That the appeal is likely to be filed against:-
1- The Principal Secretary, Local Self Government, Govt. Secretariat, Jaipur (Raj.).
2. The Director cum Special Secretary, Local self Government, Govt. Secretariat, Jaipur (Raj.).
3- The Chief Engineer (SBM), Rajasthan Urban Drinking Water Sewerage and Infrastructure Corporation Ltd., Jaipur (Raj.).
4- The Financial Advisor, Directorate of Local Bodies, Jaipur (Raj.).

That the judgement against which the Revision / Appeal / writ is to be filled is from the order passed by the **Director cum Special Secretary, Local Self Government, Government Secretariat, Jaipur (Raj.) vide order dated 06-03-2026, bearing no. F.55()PA/CE/FSTP/2025-26/3727 Dated : 06-03-2026.**
That Vakalatnama on behalf of **Shri Rajesh Kumar Meena, Superintending Engineer, FSTP Cell, Director of Local Bodies Department, Jaipur (Raj.)** is submitted herewith.
It is, therefore, humbly prayed that nothing be done in the case till the applicants are heard.

HUMBLE PETITIONER
THROUGH HIS COUNSELS
(Gurcharan Singh Gill)
ADDITIONAL ADVOCATE GENERAL

JAIPUR
DATED:
DIPR/C/5650/2026

TEHRAN

Murderers must pay for killing Iran's Larijani: Mojtaba Khamenei

AP

Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Wednesday that the killers of security chief Ali Larijani "will have to pay for it". "Every drop of spilled blood comes at a price, and the criminal murderers of these martyrs will soon have to pay it," Mr. Khamenei said, in a message published on his official Telegram channel. AFP

KABUL

Mass burials expected for victims of Kabul drug rehab centre strike

AP

Afghans readied on Wednesday to bury their dead from this week's Pakistani air strike on a Kabul drug treatment centre, as an international NGO confirmed that hundreds were killed and wounded. Interior Ministry spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani confirmed a mass funeral would be held later Wednesday. AFP

JAKARTA

Indonesia arrests four military officers 'involved in acid attack'

SORI, ORA WEDI.
Hari ini Andrie, esok bisa jadi kita semua!
JANGAN DIAM LAWAN!!!
KAMI MENGUTUK
MAKIN BERANI KARENA ANDRIE
MAKIN BERANI KARENA ANDRIE

AFP

Indonesian military authorities said on Wednesday that they have arrested four officers allegedly involved in an acid attack on an activist known for his opposition to the expanded role of military in civilian life. Andrie Yunus suffered burns to 20% of his face and body from acid thrown by assailants from a motorcycle. REUTERS

LONDON

Scottish Parliament rejects Bill to let terminally ill people end lives

AP

Scottish lawmakers rejected a Bill on Tuesday that would have legalised assisted dying. The proposed law, if passed by Parliament and approved by the British government, would have allowed Scots with a terminal illness and a life expectancy of six months or less to seek help to end their life. AFP

Israel conducts waves of attacks on Beirut; to strike river crossings

Israel targets densely populated areas like Bashoura, Basta, and Zuqaq al-Blat in strikes; Lebanese authorities report at least 12 deaths and 41 injuries, including Hezbollah's *Al Manar TV* director; 912 killed and over a million displaced in Lebanon

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Israel repeatedly struck central Beirut on Wednesday, with Lebanese authorities reporting a death toll of at least 12 including a director for Hezbollah's *Al Manar TV* channel, and said it would strike river crossings in south Lebanon.

Lebanon was drawn into the West Asia war on March 2 when militant group Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel to avenge the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel responded with intense strikes on multiple regions around the country and by launching ground operations in the south. It has also hit central Beirut several times, with and without warning.

Major hit: Flame rises from a residential building following an Israeli air strike in central Beirut, Lebanon, on Wednesday. AP

On Wednesday, three densely populated neighbourhoods in the heart of Beirut were hit. In Bashoura, a whole building collapsed into a mound of rubble after being struck.

A map shared by the Israeli military indicated the targeted building had already been hit last week, also after an evacuation warning.

Lebanese authorities on Tuesday said Israeli strikes have killed at least 912 people since March 2, while more than a million people have registered as displaced.

Lebanon's official *National News Agency* (NNA) earlier said a strike had hit an apartment in the central Zuqaq al-Blat neighbourhood, a densely populated area close to the government's headquarters and several embassies.

Hezbollah's *Al Manar TV* said Mohammad Sherri, the director of its political programmes, had been killed along with his wife in one of the strikes in Zuqaq al-Blat.

Lebanon's Health Ministry reported a preliminary toll for strikes on both areas of 12 dead and 41 wounded, adding that efforts were under way to identify those killed.

The Israeli military on Wednesday said it planned to strike bridges and crossings over the Litani River.

"To prevent the transfer of reinforcements and weapons, the (Israeli army) intends to attack crossings on the Litani River."

Sri Lanka to welcome and support refugees: Minister

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka is ready to receive and support all those forced to flee the country during the civil war and now living as refugees in Tamil Nadu, Cabinet Minister and Leader of the House Bimal Rathnayake told *The Hindu*, urging the Governments of India and Tamil Nadu to refrain from using refugees as "a tool for political propaganda".

The Minister made the remarks when queried about the government's current position on refugee-returnees from Tamil Nadu, in the wake of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's letter – dated February 15, 2026 – to Prime Minister Modi seeking the Union government's intervention on issues concerning Sri Lankan Tamils living in India for over four decades. Apart from requesting New Delhi to rescind administrative instructions barring consideration of citizenship applications from Sri Lankan Tamils, Mr. Stalin sought an executive clarification waiving passport and visa requirements, where appropriate, for citizenship or long-term visa applications based on verified identity documentation issued by the Tamil Nadu government. According to Mr. Stalin's letter, around 89,000 individuals reside in and outside camps across Tamil Nadu. Nearly 40% of them were born there.

Pointing out that 18,542 persons returned from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka in the 16-year period from January 2009 to June 2025, Mr. Rathnayake said: "We are certainly ready to welcome those who wish to return. However, if some of them, born in India, or who have lived, studied, and worked there for decades, or married an Indian, decide to seek Indian citizenship, we cannot argue with that position. It is their reality and their right to seek citizenship there." Further, in a message to political actors in India, he said: "My humble request to the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu is that please don't use the refugees as a tool for political propaganda around elections."

Bimal Rathnayake

'Humane solution"

A prominent voice in the Anura Kumara Dissanayake administration, Mr. Rathnayake, who is a polit bureau member of the leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) or People's Liberation Front, had visited refugee camps in Tamil Nadu in 2007, and pushed the Sri Lankan government to pass a law granting citizenship to 28,500 persons living in the camps. In May 2025, when former Jaffna MP and senior lawyer M.A. Sumanthiran highlighted the arrest of a 75-year-old Sri Lankan Tamil refugee returning from India, on charges of leaving the island without a valid passport, Mr. Rathnayake said the government would address the matter.

Mr. Stalin's letter to PM Modi drew wide attention in Sri Lankan media and among politicians. Mano Ganesan, Opposition MP and leader of the Tamil Progressive Alliance – representing the Malaiyaha Tamils – called for a "permanent, humane solution". "Sri Lankan refugees living inside and outside settlements in India need clarity, not decades of uncertainty. Give them a dignified choice... a generation born, educated and integrated in India deserves justice. Others deserve freedom of choice," he said in a social media post.

Last week, speaking in New Delhi at a screening of *Frontline* journalist R.K. Radhakrishnan's documentary on refugees, Mr. Sumanthiran, General Secretary of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), said that while the diminishing number of Tamils in Sri Lanka may not favour the Tamil polity trying to strengthen its constituency, "this is an exceptional situation." Those who wish to remain in India must have the option, he said, adding that "in international law, nobody should be a stateless person."

Authorities said a total of 246 persons from 46 families returned from India to Sri Lanka between July 2025 and February 2026, with no arrests reported during the time. S. Sooriyakumari, president of OfERR (Organisation for Eelam Refugees' Rehabilitation) Ceylon, a non-profit organisation working with Sri Lankan refugee communities, said the Sri Lankan government must clear administrative hurdles, facilitate easy paperwork, and ensure smooth reintegration of those returning.

Cuba vows 'unbreakable resistance'

Agence France-Presse
HAVANA

Cuba's leader on Tuesday said the U.S. would face "unbreakable resistance" if it tries to take over the island nation.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he would "take" Cuba, adding: "We'll be doing something with Cuba very soon."

"Faced with the worst-case scenario, Cuba has one guarantee: any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable resistance," Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel wrote in a statement on X.

Festive exodus

Ferry frenzy: Thousands of travellers scramble and jostle each other to board ferries at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal, joining the massive annual exodus to celebrate Id ul-Fitr in their hometowns, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Wednesday. AP

As fire and fury hit Trump's MAGA tent, Vance walks the tightrope for 2028

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George

The fire and fury that is consuming the MAGA (Make America Great Again) fraternity that had rallied behind Donald J. Trump's anti-war rhetoric for a decade touched the administration on Tuesday when Joe Kent, a long-term acolyte, resigned as the director of the National Counterterrorism Centre. "Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby," Mr. Kent, who served in the U.S. Army for 20 years and later in the CIA, wrote in his resignation letter.

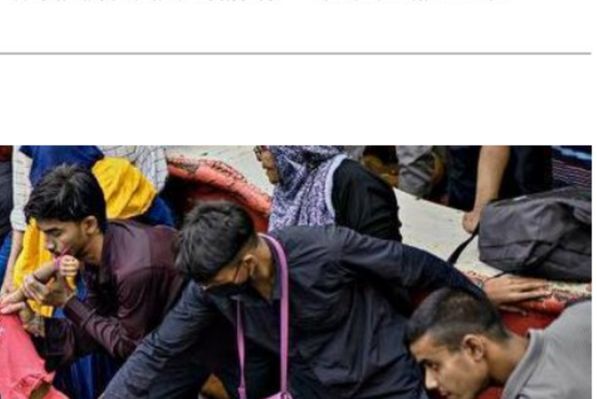
Laura Loomer, an influential cheerleader of the war who has Mr. Trump's ear took to social media speculating that Tulsi Gabbard, Director of National Intelligence and a strong opponent of wars, could be the next to resign.

The new war launched by Mr. Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu is triggering a wide range of realignment of personal loyalties and political positions across both parties, but a role reversal within the Republican Party is remarkable. Three key figures who are now the main mouthpieces of Mr. Trump's new war – Senators Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio – were opponents of Mr. Trump in his primary contest in 2015.

Difficult line

Mr. Trump had clashed with all three on policy issues, particularly on West Asian wars, and hurled insults at all three. While they now rally Republicans behind Mr. Trump – polling shows above 80% of the party's supporters backing the war – MAGA natives such as Mr. Kent could find it increasingly difficult to remain in the Trump tent. Marjorie Taylor Greene resigned from the House of Representatives on January 5, 2026, nearly two months before the war began, while Vice-President J.D. Vance and Ms. Gabbard are walking a difficult line.

Both have stopped short of supporting the war but reiterated their trust in Mr. Trump's judgement and capacity. Their position is as follows: that it is not in America's interest for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, and Mr. Trump knows what he is doing. This framing allows them to continue in the administration while not endorsing the war completely, and holding Mr. Trump responsible for the consequences while praising his leadership.



Core group: Donald Trump, J.D. Vance and Marco Rubio take part in a meeting at the White House in Washington DC. REUTERS

Mr. Vance, standing next to Mr. Trump in the Oval Office on March 16, said the President had been consistent "going back to 2015...that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon. And I agree with him." He added, "...we have a smart President whereas in the past, we've had dumb Presidents and I trust President Trump to get the job done... and to make sure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated."

On March 13, he did not deny the reporting that he had expressed reservations – which were publicly articulated too – about attacking Iran. Asked what his advice to Mr. Trump was, Mr. Vance said, "I'm not going to show up here and in front of God and everybody else tell you exactly what I said in that classified room – partly because I don't want to go to prison, and partly because I think it's important for the President of the United States to be able to talk to those advisers without those advisers running their mouth to the American media."

The stakes are high for Mr. Vance, who is 41, and the frontrunner for the Republican nomination for President in 2028. Mr. Trump has publicly acknowledged that Mr. Vance had a different view. "He was, I would say, philosophically a little bit different than me. I think he was maybe less enthusiastic about going, but he was quite enthusiastic... We get along very well on this." Mr. Trump has also been suggesting that Mr. Vance and Mr. Rubio are both potential candidates in 2028, though the latter has so far maintained that he has no plans to challenge the Vice-President. Mr. Trump wants to be the kingmaker in the Republican Party, and his role after the presidency will be contingent upon a contest for the nomination.

'MAGA is Trump'

Mr. Trump has countered criticism from within his camp on two lines. One, critics do not understand MAGA, and this war fits well within the mandate that he sought in three elections. "MAGA is saving our country. MAGA is making our country great again. MAGA is America First," he said in one interview. "MAGA wants to see our country thrive and be safe. And MAGA loves what I'm doing – every aspect of it."

Secondly, he has repeated his long-held claim that MAGA is a movement that follows him in whatever he says and decides. "I think that MAGA is Trump," he said, dismissing criticism that the war against Iran has betrayed the trust of his voters. He is largely right on this count. For all their scepticism of wars and global entanglement, three surveys put MAGA Republican support for the strikes at between 85 and 90% – significantly stronger than Republicans generally, and Americans generally.

Since Mr. Trump manages to hold the majority of the MAGA camp within his spell, Mr. Vance has little option other than his current course. Even those who are not in the administration, such as commentator Tucker Carlson and Ms. Greene, have stopped short of personally criticising Mr. Trump, suggesting instead that he is being misled. "It's time to reorganise. It's already beginning. The mission, not the man," Ms. Greene posted this week. At the moment, it is hope against force.

POWER-PACKED

du Plessis backs Allen and Seifert to open for Knight Riders in IPL

PTI

Veteran South Africa batter Faf du Plessis backed the New Zealand pair of Tim Seifert and Finn Allen to be KKR's opening pair in this year's IPL. "We all saw the carnage they caused in the T20 World Cup. That counts as a massive factor. So, if KKR can fit them together at the top, it will be really nice for the team," he said.

OPTIMISATION OF RESOURCES

Skipper Rahane should bat in the top-order for KKR, feels Balaji

FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

KKR skipper Ajinkya Rahane should bat in the top-order. He has done phenomenally well for CSK at No. 3. Cameron Green can bat at four. That will give him time to settle down and then start going after the bowlers. A top four of Finn Allen, Tim Seifert, Rahane and Green is going to be the go-to one — L. Balaji, former India pacer.

NEW LOOK

Rajasthan Royals unveils its jersey for the upcoming season

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rajasthan Royals unveiled its new jersey for the upcoming IPL season on Wednesday in Jaipur. The 2008 winner shared on Instagram with the caption "New look, same Halla Bol. Jersey: RRevealed." The newly appointed captain Riyan Parag was present at the event along with Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Ravi Bishnoi.

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

Buttler keen to continue England career despite 'poor' T20 WC

FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Jos Buttler is refusing to accept his England career is over despite admitting he had a "poor" T20 World Cup. "I certainly have ambitions [to play for England again], but no longer being a captain, I am not a selector and whatever, so what will be, will be," Buttler said on his *For the Love of Cricket podcast* with Stuart Broad.

Capitals need to deliver at optimum capacity to fulfil their elusive dream

The core of the DC squad isn't different to the last season, where it finished fifth; Axar, Kuldeep and Vipraj round off a well-stocked spin department

IPL-19 COUNTDOWN

Delhi Capitals

OVERALL NUMBERS

M	W	L	NR
266	122	141	3

BY OPPONENT

TEAM	M	W	L	NR
CSK	31	12	19	0
GT	7	3	4	0
KKR	34	15	19	0
LSG	7	4	3	0
MI	37	16	21	0
PBKS	34	17	17	0
RCB	33	12	20	1
RR	30	15	15	0
SRH	26	12	13	1

Capitals' remaining matches were against Deccan Chargers (11), PWI (6), GL (4), RPS (4) and KTK (2)

DC's 2026 LEAGUE CAMPAIGN*

April 1	vs. LSG	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
April 4	vs. MI	Delhi	3.30 p.m.
April 8	vs. GT	Delhi	7.30 p.m.
April 11	vs. CSK	Chennai	7.30 p.m.

*announced so far

MIRACLE MAN

In the recent T20 World Cup, **Tristan Stubbs** was entrusted with providing the finishing kick to the South African innings. He will probably have to essay a similar role for Delhi Capitals, given his precious ability to ease the pressure with big hits in the slog overs. Ever since the 25-year-old emerged on the scene, it has been evident that he has all the shots to wreak havoc. It boils down to Stubbs delivering in the crunch moments.

THE SQUAD

Axar Patel (Capt.), K.L. Rahul (wk), Abishek Porel (wk), Ben Duckett, David Miller, Karun Nair, Pathum Nissanka, Sahil Parakh, Nitish Rana, Prithvi Shaw, Tristan Stubbs, Ajay Mandal, Sameer Rizvi, Ashutosh Sharma, Madhav Tiwari, Auqib Nabi, Dushmantha Chameera, Kyle Jamieson, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, T. Natarajan, Lungi Ngidi, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, and Tripurana Vijay.

COMPILED BY G. PRASAD & VIVEK KRISHNAN

Unlocking potential: Axar will have to rally his troops well. FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Vivek Krishnan

When the 19th season of the Indian Premier League gets underway on March 28, Delhi Capitals will renew its long-standing quest for the grand prize.

It is part of the enduring essence of the annual summer spectacle that each of the teams can dare to dream of a campaign culminating in victory on the night of the finale.

So far in DC's existence, it has been an elusive dream. Royal Challengers Bengaluru was in the same boat until the beginning of the last edition, but finally found the stars aligning under the Ahmedabad night sky on June 3, 2025.

The core of the Capitals squad isn't very different to the previous season, when the Axar Patel-led side lost its way after a sparkling start to finish fifth in the league table.

In a competition where the batters are braver than ever before, emboldened by the Impact Player rule, the onus of propelling DC to large totals rests primarily on K.L. Rahul, Tristan Stubbs and David Miller.

Strong base

While Rahul will shoulder the responsibility of laying a strong base as opener, the middle-order will have to be manned by the South African pair.

Among the domestic batters expected to complement this trio are the likes of Nitish Rana, Ashutosh Sharma, Abishek Porel and Sameer Rizvi. Nitish, who was traded to Delhi from Rajasthan Royals, adds further experience to the middle-order.

On the spin-bowling front, the franchise is well-stocked.

Along with Axar, whose chief role is to apply the squeeze on the scoring rate as a left-arm tweaker, there is the wrist-spin pair of Kuldeep Yadav and Vipraj Nigam to provide breakthroughs.

But for the spinners to play an effective role, especially on pitches with negligible assistance, Mitchell Starc will have to ideally set the tone as the spearhead of the pace pack.

The left-armer may have retired from T20Is, but his skill-set under pressure continues to be at a premium in the slam-bang version.

A piercing gaze will also be cast on Jammu & Kashmir's Auqib Nabi. In the wake of a landmark 2025-26 domestic season that witnessed the 29-year-old take 60 wickets in the Ranji Trophy as J & K won a maiden title, the medium-pacer from Baramulla has gained national prominence. With the world now watching, it is up to Nabi to build on his body of work.

For the Capitals to have a fair chance of fulfilling a deep-rooted desire, all these players have to deliver at optimum capacity.

Captaincy credentials: Kishan had recently led Jharkhand during its Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph. FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

Kishan to lead SRH in Cummins' absence

Anirudh Velamuri
HYDERABAD

Ishan Kishan has been appointed stand-in captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad ahead of IPL 2026, with opener Abhishek Sharma named his deputy.

The India wicketkeeper-batter will lead the side in the absence of regular skipper Pat Cummins, who is currently recovering from a back injury that also ruled him out of the recent T20 World Cup.

"Pat Cummins will miss a few games while recovering from injury. Until he returns, Ishan Kishan will serve as captain and Abhishek Sharma as vice-captain," the franchise posted on X on Wednesday.

This marks a rare moment in IPL history, where every team features an Indian captain – at least until Cummins regains full fitness, the last time being in the early stages of the 2019 edition. Cummins has led Sunrisers since 2024, leading them to the final in his debut season.

The team, however, slipped to a sixth-place finish last year and missed out on the playoffs. Overall, in 30 matches as skipper, he has registered 15 wins, 14 losses, and one No Result.

Kishan, who was signed for ₹11.25 crore in 2025, made an immediate impact with an unbeaten 47-ball 106 on SRH debut against Rajasthan Royals. His form, however, tapered off as the season progressed, ending with 354 runs from 13 innings at a strike rate of 152.58.

The 27-year-old heads into IPL 2026 in excellent touch. He guided Jharkhand to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, its maiden domestic title, finishing as the tournament's leading run-scorer with 517 runs in 10 innings. That earned him a national team recall for its title-winning T20 World Cup campaign, where he amassed 317 runs, the second-most for India.

Kohli has a long stint as RCB begins training

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Virat Kohli was the star attraction in defending champion Royal Challengers Bengaluru's first training session ahead of IPL 2026. Kohli, the long-serving RCB batter, was all business at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Wednesday.

The 37-year-old started the session with a pep talk to his teammates gathered in a circle, with head coach Andy Flower by his side. The former India captain then got into the thick of things with an hour-long batting stint.

Facing Venkatesh Iyer, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and the spinners group led by Krunal Pandya, Kohli took an aggressive approach. Some shots made sweet connection, with the ball sailing deep into the mid-wicket stands.

In the backdrop of uncertainty with international flights due to the West Asia conflict, England's Jordan Cox was the only foreign player in attendance.

Listening to the master: RCB's new signing Cox is all ears as Kohli makes a point during practice on Wednesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Cox, an attacking top-order batter, engaged in a long chat with Kohli before the latter wielded the willow.

Rajat Patidar, who led RCB to its maiden IPL title last season, was not present. Batting coach Dinesh Karthik and left-arm pacer Yash Dayal were the other notable absentees.

Karnataka southpaw Devdutt Padikkal, fresh from a good campaign in the Ranji Trophy, was paired with Kohli in the batting net.

Almost immediately after the duo took the pads off to wind down, the session came to a halt due to rain.

Venkatesh. K. MURALI KUMAR

The evening held extra significance as normalcy returned to the stadium, which has been sidelined since the stampede which claimed 11 lives in June last year.

After months of speculation and suspense, the iconic stadium finally received the nod to host IPL 2026 matches from the office of the State Home Minister, G. Parameshwara.

High-level cricket action is set to return to the stadium on March 28, when RCB takes on Sunrisers Hyderabad in the opening match of IPL 2026.

Senegal stripped of AFCON title, Morocco declared champion

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Senegal said it will appeal after it was sensationally stripped of the Africa Cup of Nations title on Tuesday and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) instead declared Morocco champion, two months after their chaotic final.

Several Senegalese players controversially walked off the pitch in Rabat during the final on January 18 in protest when the hosts were awarded a penalty late in second-half stoppage time.

After Senegal's players eventually returned having been coaxed back onto the pitch by captain Sadio Mane, Morocco missed the penalty and Pape Gueye went on to score the goal in extra time that gave his team a 1-0 victory.

CAF said that having studied Morocco's appeal, "the Senegal national team is declared to have forfeited the match" and the result was "officially recorded as 3-0" in favour of Morocco. The CAF Appeals Committee justified its decision by applying Articles 82 and 84 of the AFCON Regulations, which state that if a team "refuses to play or leaves the ground before the regular end of the match without the authorisation of the referee, it shall be considered (loser) and shall be eliminated for good from the current competition".

Chaotic finale: Senegal and Morocco players clash during the AFCON final on January 18, 2026. AFP

The articles add that the team contravening the regulations "will lose its match by 3-0".

The Royal Moroccan Football Federation (FRMF) said in a statement its appeal "was never intended to contest the sporting performance of the teams participating in this competition, but solely to request the application of the competition regulations".

Senegal's football authorities said they will appeal "as soon as possible" to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

INBRIEF

Enzo Fernandez uncertain over Chelsea future

Enzo Fernandez has suggested he could leave Chelsea at the end of the current season after losing to Paris Saint Germain in the Champions League pre-quarterfinals. He told ESPN: "I don't know, there are eight games left and the FA Cup. There's the World Cup and then we'll see. Now, our focus must be on winning the FA Cup and achieving our goal of qualifying for next season's Champions League."

Thomas and Uber Cup: Indian teams clubbed with China

The Indian men's and women's badminton teams, seeded eighth, have been clubbed in Group A alongside defending champion and top seed China in the Thomas and Uber Cup championships to be held in Horsens, Denmark, from April 24 to May 3. India, the 2022 Thomas Cup champion, will be a favourite to claim one of the two quarterfinal spots from the group which also comprises Canada and Australia. The women's team, which claimed bronze in the 2014 and 2016 editions, however, has a slightly tricky road as it is clubbed with Denmark and Ukraine.

CITY ROUND-UP

Chief Ministers Cup from March 22
The second edition of the Chief Minister's Cup football tournament (sponsored by Vaishnavi Group) will be held in Bengaluru from March 22 to April 12.
The tournament will feature 16 MLA constituencies from across the city, and they will be split into four groups of four teams each. The group stage will be followed by quarterfinals, semifinals and the final.
The winner will be awarded a cash prize of ₹2 lakh, runner-up ₹1 lakh and losing semifinalists ₹25,000 each.

Inter-club cue sports tournament
The B.C. Ananthasayanam Memorial Handicap inter-club billiards and snooker tournament will be held at the Karnataka State Billiards Association (KSBA) from March 29 to April 11. Associations and clubs affiliated to KSBA are eligible to participate. For details, call: I.H. Manudev (95353 96000) / B.C. Karthik (95380 33372).

Big win for Ashco
Ashco Hockey Club thrashed Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Tumkur 16-1 in the KSHA B-division hockey league here on Wednesday.

LIVE TELECAST

Squash: Indian Open, FanCode, 12 p.m.

IFL: Sony Sports Ten 1, 5 & LIV, 4 & 6.30 p.m.

ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.

Conference League: Sony Sports Ten 3 & LIV, 11.15 p.m.

Europa League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 5 & LIV, 11.15 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Friday)

PSG, Real Madrid and Arsenal march into the last eight with easy wins

The title holder romps past Chelsea to claim a comprehensive 8-2 aggregate victory; the Spanish giant snuffs out City's challenge; Gunners ease past Leverkusen to keep the quadruple in sight; Sporting produces a classic comeback to end the fairytale run of Bodo/Glimt

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Holder Paris Saint-Germain, record 15-time winner Real Madrid and Arsenal surged into the quarterfinals of the Champions League on Tuesday, while Sporting produced a brilliant comeback in Portugal to end Bodo/Glimt's remarkable run.

PSG crushed Chelsea 3-0 in London to claim a comprehensive 8-2 aggregate victory in their last-16 tie.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia followed his first-leg double by opening the scoring on six minutes at Stamford Bridge.

Bradley Barcola fired in a brilliant second goal from an Achraf Hakimi assist, and the home fans were streaming for the exits when substitute Senny Mayulu swept in PSG's third on the night just after the hour.

Thundering strike: Eze, centre, rockets in Arsenal's opener against Leverkusen. REUTERS

Manchester City lost 2-1 at home to Real as it went out 5-1 on aggregate.

Real led 3-0 from the first leg in Spain and its qualification was never in doubt after City's Bernardo Silva was sent off on 20 minutes for stopping a goal-bound Vinicius Junior shot on the line with his arm.

Vinicius converted the penalty, and Pep Guardiola's side had too much to do, even if Erling Haaland levelled the scores on the night before half-time with his 30th goal this season.

Real replaced Thibaut Courtois with Andriy Lunin in goal at half-time, and the tie was over long before Vinicius scored again in stoppage time to seal the win on the night.

Premier League leader Arsenal's dream of a quadruple remains alive after it beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-0 at the Emirates Stadium for a 3-1 aggregate success.

The Gunners finished the tie off with goals either side of half-time from Eberechi Eze and Declan Rice will play Sporting in the quarterfinals.

The Portuguese champion produced a superb fightback, overturning a 3-0 deficit from last week's first leg against Bodo/Glimt by beating the Norwegians 5-0 after extra time in Lisbon.

The results (pre-quarterfinals, second leg): Sporting 5 (Inacio 34, Pote 61, Suarez 78-pen, Araujo 92, Nel 120+1) bt Bodo/Glimt 0 (AET, Sporting wins 5-3 on aggregate).
Arsenal 2 (Eze 36, Rice 63) bt Bayer Leverkusen 0 (Arsenal wins 3-1 on aggregate).
Chelsea 0 lost to PSG 3 (Kvaratskhelia 6, Barcola 14, Mayulu 62) (PSG wins 8-2 on aggregate).
Manchester City 1 (Haaland 41) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Vinicius Junior 22-pen, 90+3) (Real wins 5-1 on aggregate).

'Dhakshineswar can adapt to pro circuit'

TENNIS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Former India No. 1 tennis player Somdev Devvarman backed the fast-rising Dhakshineswar Suresh to quickly adapt to life on the professional circuit.

Dhakshineswar, who is representing the Wake Forest University in the US collegiate system, single-handedly guided India past the Netherlands in the recent Davis Cup Qualifiers first-round tie in Bengaluru. The 25-year-old is set to turn pro in a few months.

"Dhakshineswar is an unbelievable player. His rise has not been a surprise for people who have known him since he was a kid," Somdev said on the sidelines of the TNGF Premier League 2026 fourth round here on Wednesday.

"He has put in quite a shift over the last 18 months to improve by leaps and bounds. It is exciting because he is going to turn pro in May. There is going to be a different kind of pressure and competition week in week out. But we now know that he has the goods to do it," Somdev said of Dhakshineswar, who is ranked 474 on the ATP chart.

While Dhakshineswar has been punching well above his weight at the highest level, India No. 1 Sumit Nagal looks a shadow of the player he was a couple of years ago.

Somdev stressed that World No. 278 Nagal should become "healthy" to climb the ladder.

"The season gets tougher when you play while being unhealthy. Nagal has been unhealthy for a large part of the last six to eight months.

"Firstly, he has to get back on track. If he is healthy, he can play some great tennis," said Somdev, who mentors the 28-year-old.

Quality of balls under the scanner at the National table tennis championship

Amol Karhadkar
INDORE

The quality of balls being used at the 87th senior inter-State and National table tennis championship, sponsored by Ultimate Table Tennis, has come under scrutiny, with several paddlers and coaches voicing concerns.

The tournament is using Stag Global balls, manufactured by an Indian company.

While these are ITTF-approved, they are not commonly used in World Table Tennis (WTT) events or major international competitions, nor are they consistently used across top domestic tournaments.

"These balls are lighter and get soft very early. Since these balls are not used in WTT events or at World Cups and Championships, we hardly play with them," Manav Thakkar, World No. 33 and the highest-ranked player in the men's draw, told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

Good showing: Rajasekaran and Selenadeepti of Tamil Nadu reached the mixed doubles round-of-32. AMOL KARHADKAR

"Had we known well in advance, we could have trained with these balls to adapt. It would be better if there were consistency in the balls used throughout the domestic season."

Inconsistency
The inconsistency has been evident across the circuit. While four of the five national ranking tournaments this season used Stag balls, another opted for Stiga.

The inter-institutional tournament – the second-most prestigious senior domestic event – featured DHS balls, which are also used in international competitions.

Competition manager N. Ganesan, however, defended the choice. "We have been using only ITTF-approved balls, and it's the same case for the National Championship," he said.

Former international and Arjuna awardee Soumyadeep Roy echoed the concerns, noting that the balls tend to "get soft too soon and hardly impart spin." Sandeep Ghosh, father-cum-coach of Swastika Ghosh, had also written to the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) last month, urging standardisation in line with WTT events.

A TTFI official, requesting anonymity, said: "The federation has to look after the interests of all players. These balls are manufactured by the same global company that produces several top international brands, including Stag."

Top results: Mixed doubles: round-of-64: P. Yeshwanth & Trupti Purohit (Kar) w/o Payas Jain & Syndrela Das (PSPB); Rishabh Mayank & Sneha Bhowmick (Har) bt Harkunwar Singh & Kaashvi Gupta 11,6 11-9, 11-8; Chitrax Bhatt & Frenaz Chipia (Guj) bt Siddhesh Pande & Shriya Anand (TN) 11-8, 11-2, 11-7; Agniv Gohain & Bhavna Kashyap (Asm) bt Nithin V. & M. Kajanethra (Pon) 11-4, 11-7, 11-5; B. Rajasekaran Muthu & Selenadeepti Selvakumar (TN) bt Harsh Srivastava & Sunidhi Dewan (Raj) 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6.

Abhay aims to break into top 20 by end of the current season

SQUASH

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

India's top squash player, 27-year-old Abhay Singh, is known for his aggressive, adrenaline-driven style on court. Ranked World No. 26, he has already claimed 11 PSA Challenger titles and is now aiming to break into the top 20 by the end of the 2025-26 season.

Abhay said his "Challenger days are more or less done," and plans to focus on higher-tier events – Copper, Silver, Gold, and Platinum – though he might play the occasional Challenger.

"Now it's about going into big events, winning or losing. I'm focused on bigger events," he told *The Hindu* during a virtual interaction on Wednesday.

While the 2026 Asian Games looms large, offering a direct route to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics for the singles winner, Abhay is concentrating on the season. "We're just focusing on the season. Six events remain, with the JSW Indian Open in Mumbai (Mar. 18 to 22) and the season-ending British Open (May 26-June 7) later. After that, my coaches James Willstrop and Harinder Singh and I will plan ahead," he said.

Looking ahead: Abhay plans to focus on the bigger events. FILE PHOTO: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Despite a modest start to the season, mostly second-round exits, Abhay remained confident. "Some results have been satisfactory. Hopefully, it stays consistent, and the ranking goes only upward," he added.

Having defeated the likes of Karim Abdul Gawad (former World No.1 and World champion) in the 2025 Qatar Classic (Platinum Grade) and Farres Dessouky (WR 16) in the 2026 Windy City Open (Platinum), Abhay will hope for such results more often than not with the World championships (May 8 to 16 in Giza, Egypt) and Asian Games (September 19 to Oct. 4 in Japan) coming up.

STATE BANK INDIA
SBI
Premises & Estate Dept., Amaravati LHO, Gunfoundry, Abids, Hyderabad-500001, Ph: 040-2338 7503, agmpe.lhoand@sbi.co.in

We invite bids / applications from experienced and eligible contractors/firms for the following works:

Sl. No	Name of the project / tender	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Last date of Submission
1	External electrical works for the proposed building at Kurnool	1.70 Cr	16.04.2026
2	External electrical works for proposed building at Nellore	21.20 lacs	16.04.2026
3	Empanelment of Electrical contractors	-	18.04.2026
4	Empanelment of Air conditioning contractors	-	18.04.2026
5	Empanelment of Electrical Safety Auditors	-	18.04.2026

The interested parties may visit https://bank.sbi / SBI In the News / Procurement news and submit their bids / applications in the prescribed format with supporting documents. Corrigendum/addendum, if any, in this matter will be published on Bank's above-mentioned website only.
18.03.2026, Hyderabad
Sd/-, Asst. General Manager (P&E)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT (PIU)-USDMA
Uttarakhand Disaster Preparedness & Resilience Project (U-PREPARE)
5TH Floor, USDMA Building, 36, IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, DEHRADUN
Website: www.u-prepare.com; E-mail: procurement.uprepare@gmail.com

Ref. No. 274/A-25/RFB/SEOC/PIU-USDMA/U-PREPARE/2025-26 Date: 18/03/2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Uttarakhand Preparedness and Resilient Enhancement Project (UPREPARE) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the procurement of goods under the following package.
A complete set to bidding documents in English may be downloaded by interested eligible bidders from the website UK Tenders Portal (https://uktenders.gov.in) from 20/03/2026.

S. No.	Package No.	Name of Package	Method of Procurement
1	IN-PIU-USDMA-511168-GO-RFB	Procurement of ICT Equipment(s) for Establishment of State emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) at USDMA Building, IT Park, Dehradun	Request for Bid (RFB)

Note: 1. Any corrigendum / addendum to the above package shall be uploaded on the website UK Tenders Portal (www.uktenders.gov.in)
2. For any clarification or information, bidders may contact via email at procurement.uprepare@gmail.com
Program Director

PUNJAB STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
SCO 74-75, BANK SQUARE, SECTOR-17B CHANDIGARH
PBX: 0172-5197847, 5197846

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

PSWC invites online tenders through GeM Portal for creation of 1.35 LMT godown capacities at 02 locations in the State of Punjab for guaranteed lease of 10 years on Build, Own and Operate/Lease basis for storage requirements of FCI under two bid system 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid'.
NIT (alongwith GeM Bid IDs) is available on Department's website i.e. https://pswc.in
PSWC reserves the right to scrap the tender at any stage without assigning any reason and PSWC will not be held liable for any costs and consequences incurred by the the intending bidders.
Note: Any corrigendum(s)/Notification(s) to this Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be published Department's website & GeM Portal.
1004/12/2025-26/9630 Managing Director, PSWC

UDAIPUR SMART CITY LIMITED
Abhay Command and Control Centre Building, Nagar Nigam, Town Hall, Udaipur (Rajasthan) 313001
Tel: 0294-2425325, Website: www.udaipursmartcity.in E-mail: uscl2016@gmail.com
NIT No. :- USCL/2025-26/717 Date :- 13/03/2026

Notice Inviting Bid

The Bid for the "Project Management Consultant for Assisting the Udaipur Smart City Limited to Design, Develop, Manage and Implementation of projects of USCL" of Rs. 242.68 Lac of procurement, invited from interested bidders upto 06s-04-2026 at 06.55 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.) of the state.
UBN No. UNP2526SLOB00172
Raj.Samwad/C/25/22678 Chief Executive Officer

कार्यालय अधिशाषी अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, विद्युत खण्ड, बीकानेर
क्रमांकः- अअ/वि.खण्ड/बी./निविदा/2025-26/1861 दिनांकः- 10.03.2026
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